MARVEL

EPIC COLLECTION

the AVENGERS

KANG WAR

ENGLEHART • S. BUSCEMA • COCKRUM • TUSKA • HECK • PÉREZ

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the AVENGERS

KANG WAR

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AVENGERS

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"BID TOMORROW GOODBYE!"

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"A BLAST FROM THE PAST!"

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"THE REALITY PROBLEM!"

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"20,000 LEAGUES UNDER JUSTICE!"

AVENGERS #149, JULY 1976
"THE GODS AND THE GANG!"

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
129
NOV
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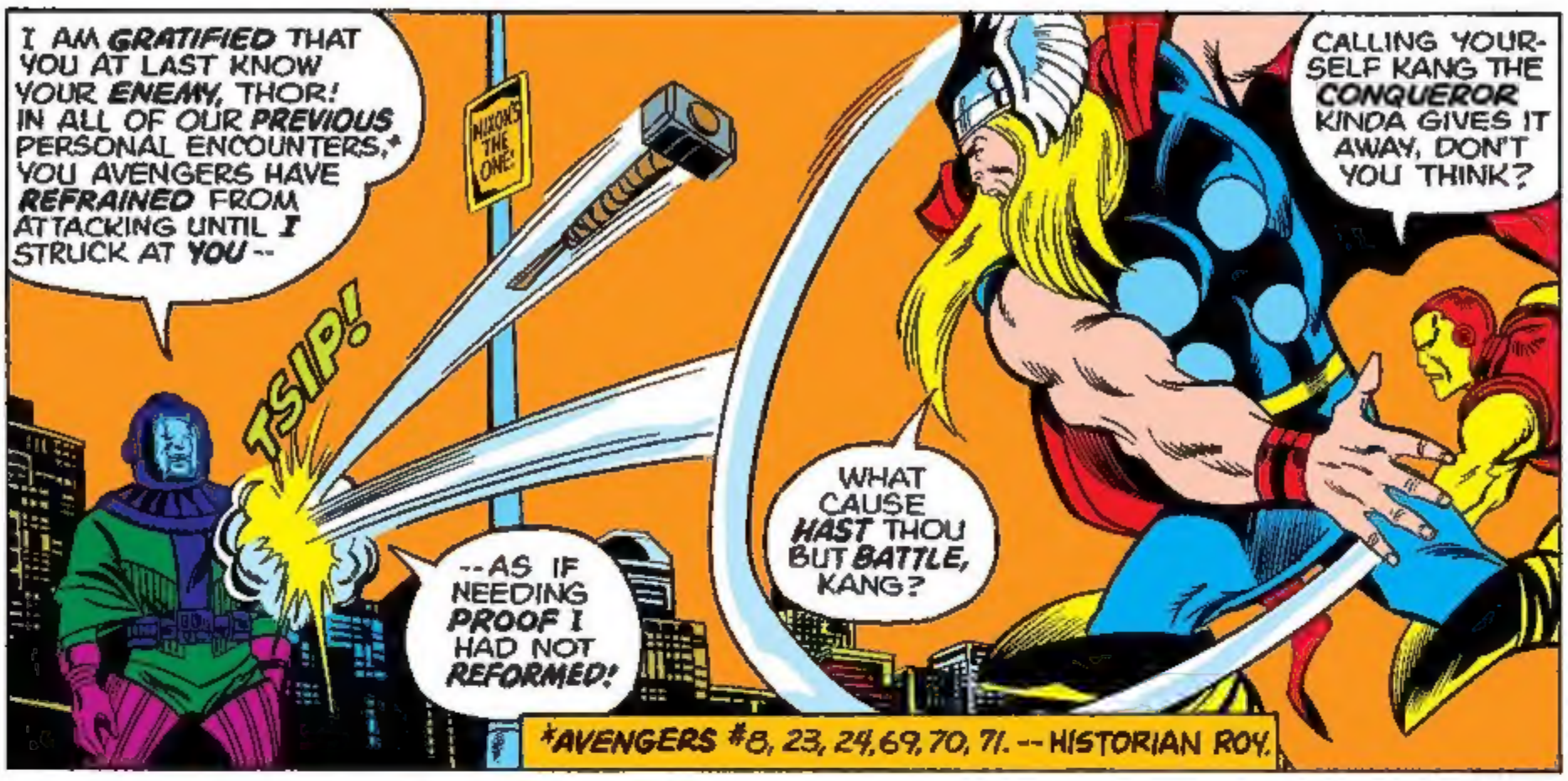
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS®
KANG THE CONQUEROR HAS A MESSAGE FOR THE WORLD!
BID TOMORROW GOOD-BYE!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

STEVE ENGLEHART, Story | SAL BUSCEMA & JOE STATON, Art | TOM ORZECHOWSKI, lettering; BILL MANTLO, coloring | ROY THOMAS, Editor


I AM GRATIFIED THAT YOU AT LAST KNOW YOUR ENEMY, THOR! IN ALL OF OUR PREVIOUS PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS,* YOU AVENGERS HAVE REFRAINED FROM ATTACKING UNTIL I STRUCK AT YOU --
NIXON'S THE ONE!
TSIP!
--AS IF NEEDING PROOF I HAD NOT REFORMED!
WHAT CAUSE HAST THOU BUT BATTLE, KANG?
CALLING YOURSELF KANG THE CONQUEROR KINDA GIVES IT AWAY, DON'T YOU THINK?
*AVENGERS #8, 23, 24, 69, 70, 71. -- HISTORIAN ROY.

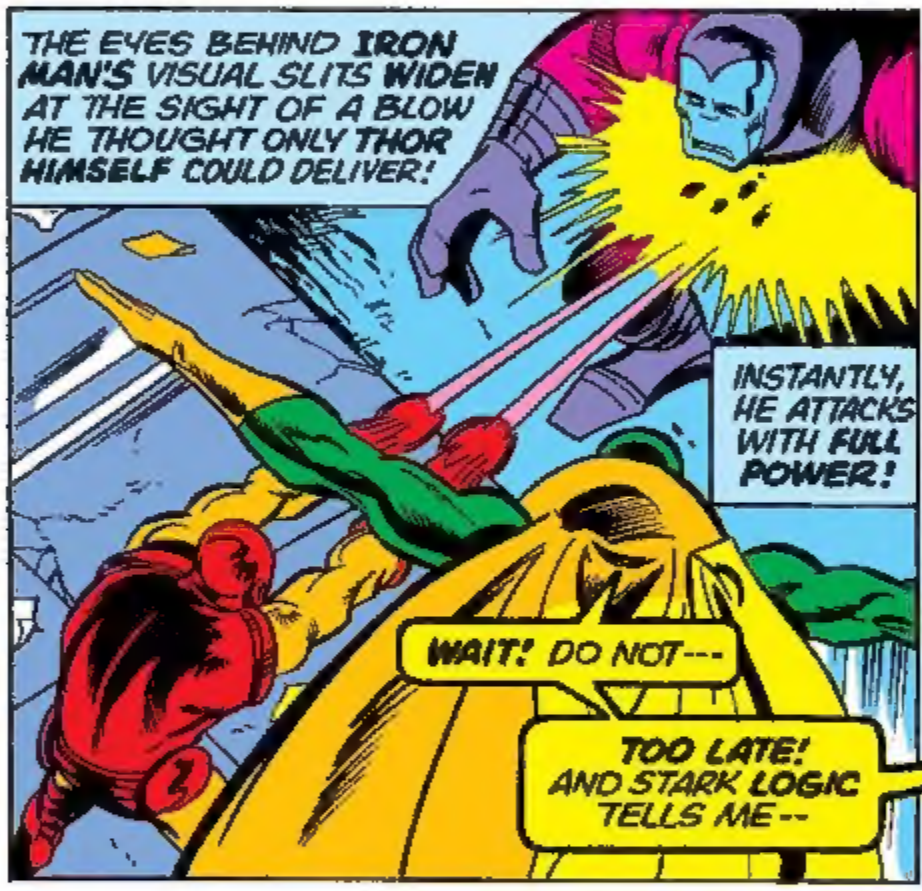
AS TO THAT, IRON MAN--ONE CANNOT CONQUER WITHOUT OPPOSITION.
I WANT YOU TO OPPOSE ME! LACKING THAT, I GAIN NO CONQUEST!

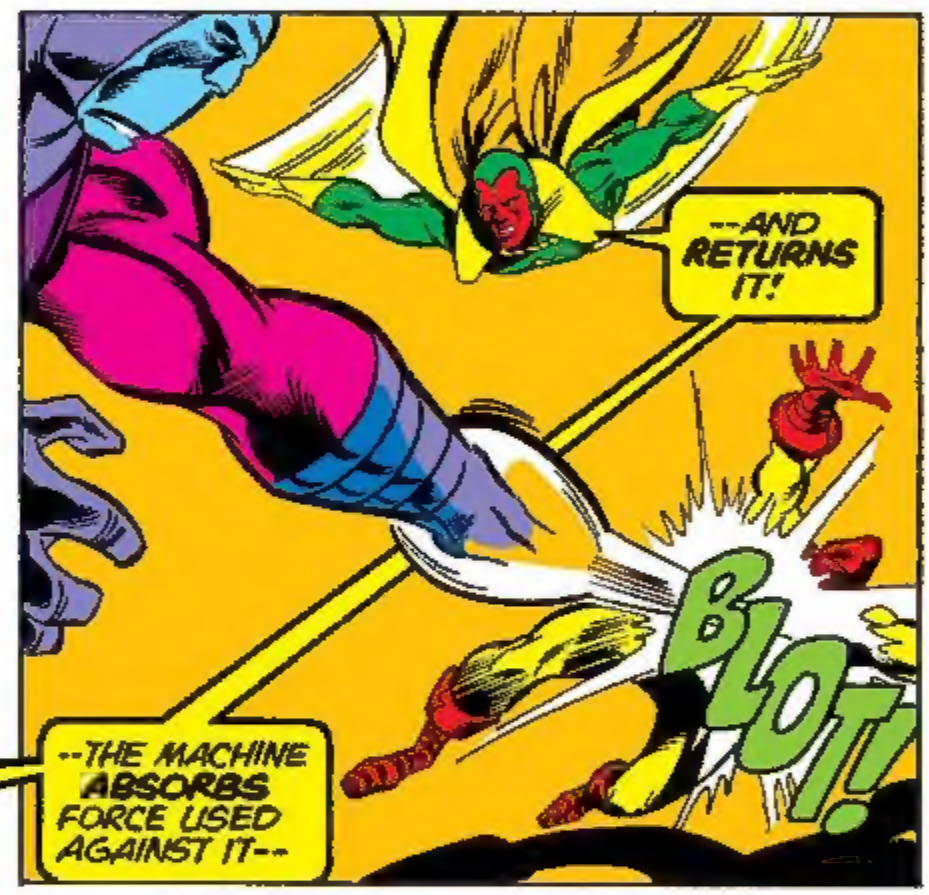
AND THOUGH OUR PREVIOUS BATTLES HAVE PROVEN... INCONCLUSIVE... I NOW PLAN TO SWEEP OVER YOU LIKE THE SEAS!
BEHOLD WHAT MASTRY OF 41ST CENTURY SCIENCE BRINGS ME!
BEHOLD--THE MACROBOTS!

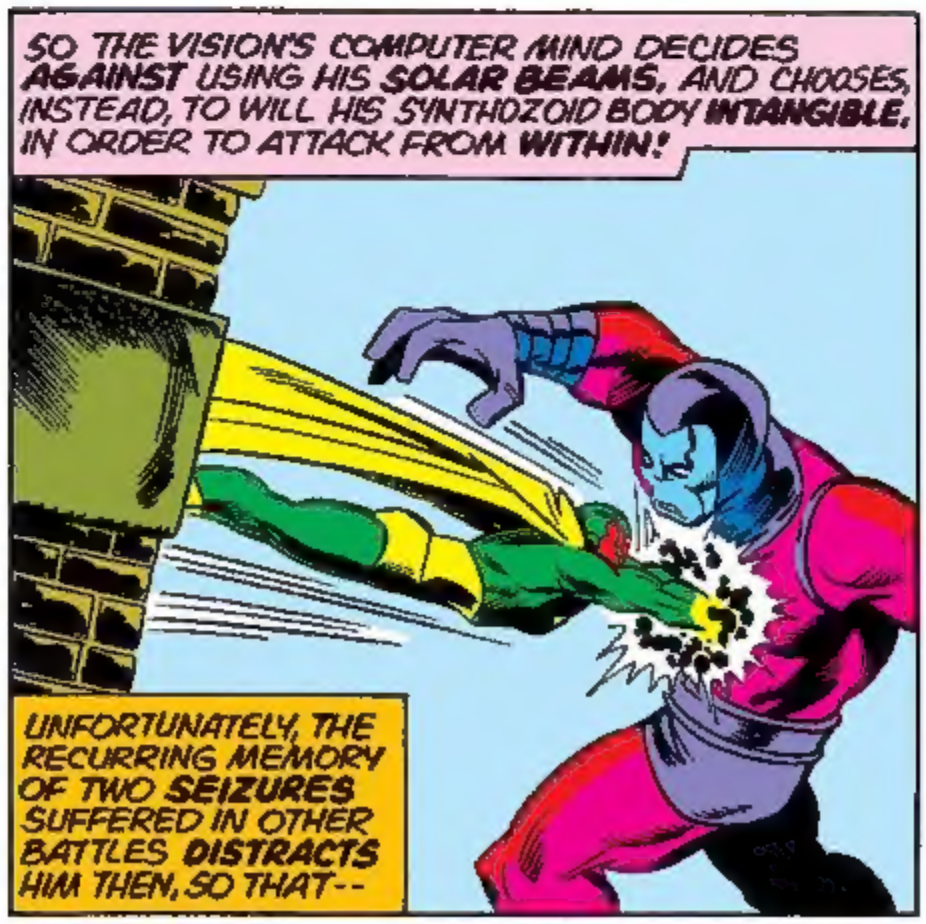
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

THE VIBRANT CRY THUNDERS IN THE CONCRETE CANYONS AROUND THEM AS THE THUNDER GOD STRIKES THE FIRST BLOW!
WOM!
BEHIND HIM, THE SWORDSMAN SQUINTS HIS EYES--
--TRYING TO FOCUS ON BATTLE AND FORGET THAT HIS WOMAN HAS LEFT HIM!

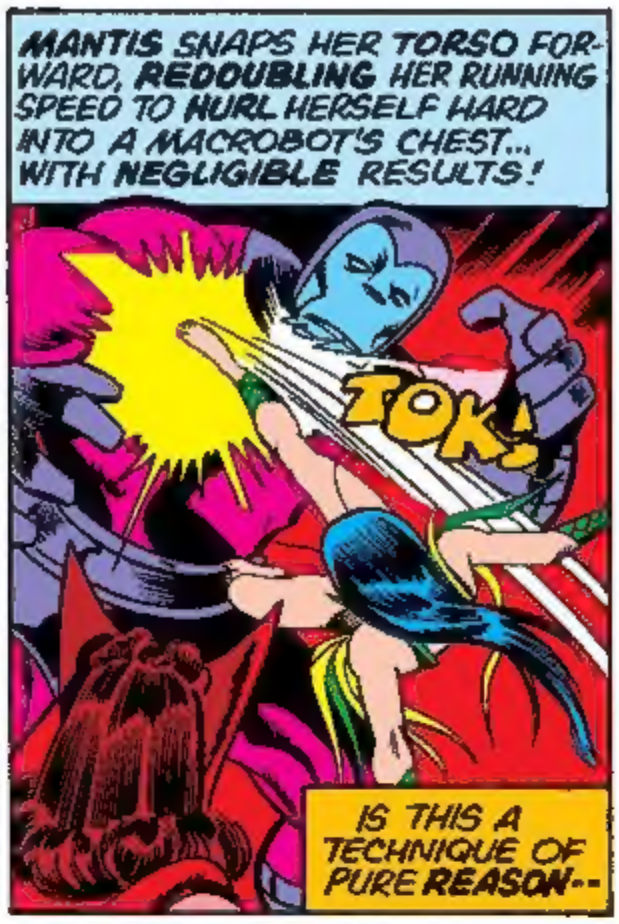
IT IS ALL IN VAIN!
FOOM!


THE EYES BEHIND IRON MAN'S VISUAL SLITS WIDEN AT THE SIGHT OF A BLOW HE THOUGHT ONLY THOR HIMSELF COULD DELIVER!
INSTANTLY, HE ATTACKS WITH FULL POWER!
WAIT! DO NOT---
TOO LATE! AND STARK LOGIC TELLS ME--

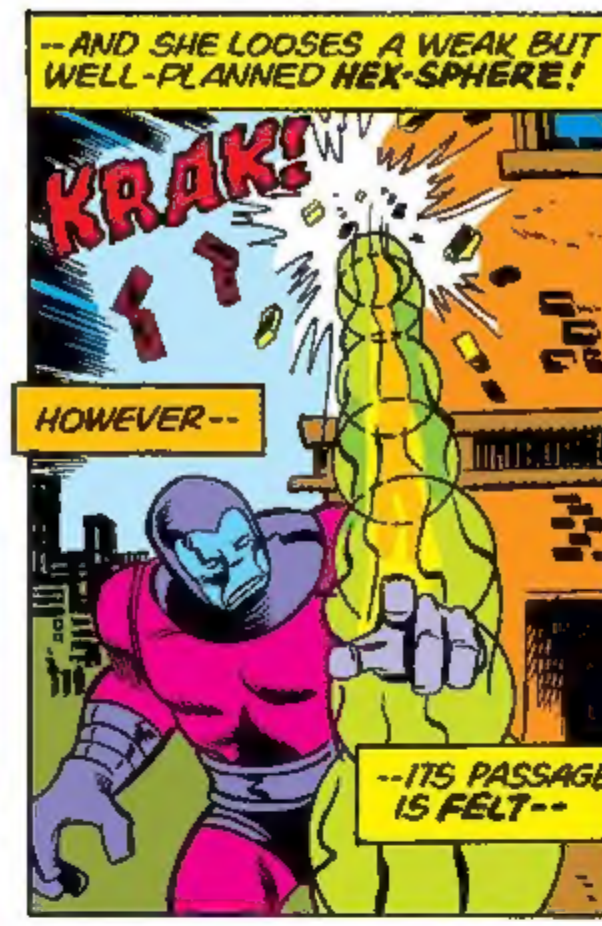

--AND RETURNS IT!
BLOT!
--THE MACHINE ABSORBS FORCE USED AGAINST IT--

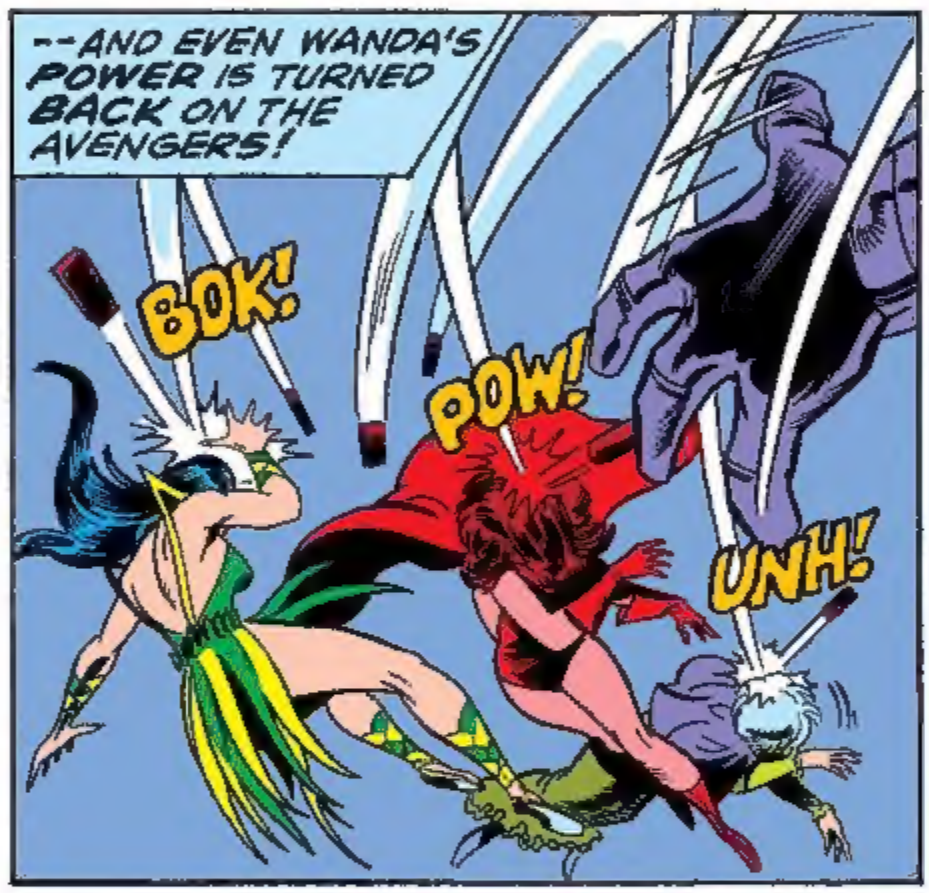

SO THE VISION'S COMPUTER MIND DECIDES AGAINST USING HIS SOLAR BEAMS, AND CHOOSES, INSTEAD, TO WILL HIS SYNTHOZOID BODY INTANGIBLE, IN ORDER TO ATTACK FROM WITHIN!
UNFORTUNATELY, THE RECURRING MEMORY OF TWO SEIZURES SUFFERED IN OTHER BATTLES DISTRACTS HIM THEN, SO THAT--

--HE FAILS TO CONSIDER THAT THE PAIN HE PLANS TO CAUSE IS ITSELF A PHYSICAL FORCE OF SORTS!
THAT CONSIDERATION ARRIVES BARELY AHEAD OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS!


MANTIS SNAPS HER TORSO FORWARD, REDOUBLING HER RUNNING SPEED TO HURL HERSELF HARD INTO A MACROBOT'S CHEST... WITH NEGLIGIBLE RESULTS!
TOK!
IS THIS A TECHNIQUE OF PURE REASON--

--OR EMOTION OVER A LOVED ONE'S PAIN? THE SCARLET WITCH FEARS THE LATTER--
--AND THOUGH STILL EXHAUSTED FROM HER RECENT BATTLE WITH NECRODAMUS, SHE HAS LEARNED TO DRAW UPON HERSELF--


--AND SHE LOOSES A WEAK BUT WELL-PLANNED HEX-SPHERE!
KRAK!
HOWEVER--
--ITS PASSAGE IS FELT--


--AND EVEN WANDA'S POWER IS TURNED BACK ON THE AVENGERS!
BOK!
POW!
UNH!

KANG NODS, COOLLY.
RIGHT. AT LAST I WAS NOT GUILTY OF UNDERESTIMATING MY FOE.
TOO OFTEN IN THE PAST I HAVE LET MY CONTEMPT FOR ALL OTHER BEINGS BLIND ME TO THESE AVENGERS' TRUE STRENGTH. BUT THIS TIME MY TACTICS WERE FAULTLESS.
THE AVENGERS ARE MINE!

REBUILDING MY EARLIER STIMULOIDS WITH A MORE SOLIDLY MECHANICAL SENSORY SYSTEM, THUS MAKING THEM MACROBOTS, WAS THE BREAKTHROUGH. THIS WILL OCCUPY AT LEAST A CHAPTER IN MY MEMOIRS.
NOT EVEN IN YOUR BOUDOIRS, HALLOWEEN-NOSE! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST--
--AND YOU'RE MY TARGET, NOT THE ROBOTS!

MINDLESS LACKEYS!

MY PERSON IS NEVER WITHOUT ITS PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD, WHICH I CAN EXTEND AT WILL! DO YOU THINK I WOULD WALK AMONG YOU IN LESS THAN COMPLETE SAFETY?
DO YOU THINK AT ALL?

INSTEAD OF ASSESSING THE AVENGERS AS LOST AND INITIATING A NEW STRATEGY, EVEN SUCH A PITIABLE WARRIOR AS JARVIS SEEKS THEIR RESCUE!
unngh! PARALYZED!

WOULD THAT I MIGHT ONCE MEET MEN AS RUTHLESS AS MYSELF, TO PROVIDE ME WITH THE SAVAGE STRUGGLE I CRAVE!
PERHAPS... IF THEY KNEW THE SIZE OF THE STAKES FOR WHICH WE CONTEND, AND THE CONCEQUENCES OF THEIR DEFEAT....

YES! THEY SHOULD KNOW! EARTH AND I SHALL SOON BE AT WAR--THE THIRD AND FINAL WORLD WAR!
AND AFTER THAT IS DISPOSED OF--

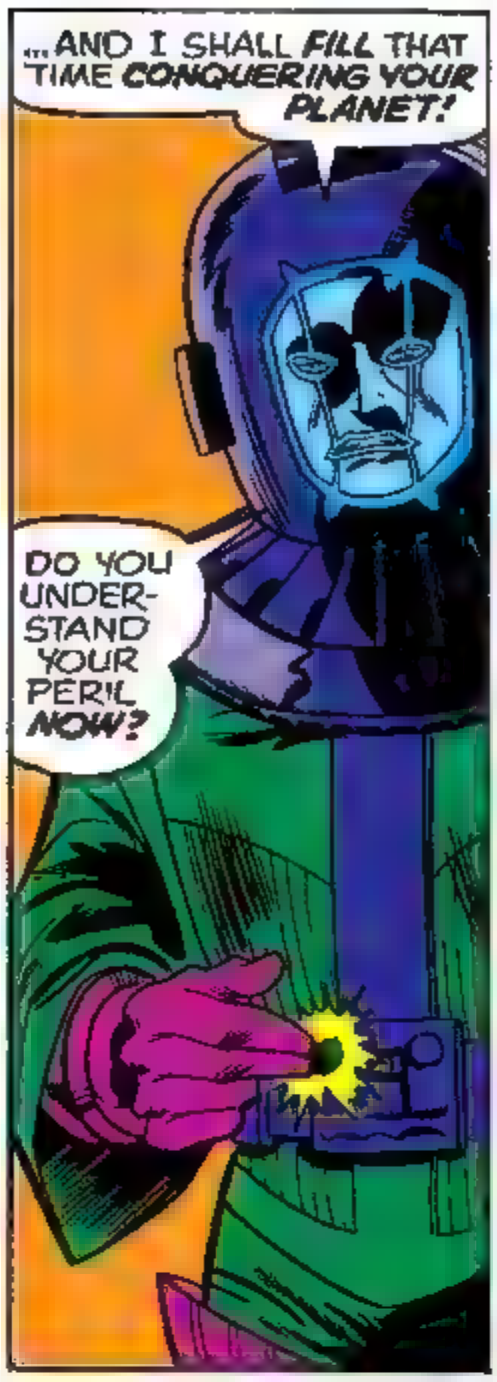
KANG SHALL RULE NOT ONLY THE FEW REMAINING MEN ON THIS NUCLEAR-SCARRED PLANET--
--BUT ALL THE UNIVERSE AS WELL!
AND NOW, THE AVENGERS ARE PREPARED FOR INSTANTANEOUS TELEPORTATION.

HEED ME, YOU FOOLS, AND HEAR OF THE DAWN STAR!
THE FEW RECORDS OF YOUR ERA WHICH SURVIVE TO MINE WERE UNCLEAR AS TO THE EXACT DATE OF ITS COMING, AND THE ELECTRO-STATIC DISTURBANCES IN YOUR BRANCH OF THE TIME STREAM--
--HAVE PREVENTED MY SEARCHING IT OUT!

YET IT IS THE REASON I HAVE ALWAYS CHOSEN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TO ATTACK --AND THE REASON I SECRETED A TEMPORAL MONITOR DURING A PREVIOUS INCURSION, TO SIGNAL ITS BIRTH TO ME!
ITS BIRTH, BARBARIANS, HERALDS THE COMPLETENESS OF THE CELESTIAL MADONNA--
--SHE WHO WILL BEAR THE ONE!

HER MATE, THE RECORDS SAY, WILL BE THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH, THOUGH THEY GIVE HIM NO NAME--
--BUT I, KANG THE FIRST, WILL BE HE!
FATHER TO THE CHILD-- AND THROUGH HIM, RULER OF THE HEAVENS!

IN APPEARING ABOVE AVENGERS MANSION, THE STAR PROCLAIMS ONE OF THESE THREE WOMEN THE CHOSEN ONE!
AS YET, SHE IS UNAWARE OF HER SPECIAL DESTINY, SINCE IT YET LIES IN HER FUTURE--
--AND I, TOO, REMAIN IGNORANT OF HER IDENTITY, FOR ALL RECORDS OF HER NAME WERE DESTROYED THROUGH THE YEARS!
BUT ALL WILL BE REVEALED IN TIME...


...AND I SHALL FILL THAT TIME CONQUERING YOUR PLANET!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR PERIL NOW?

WHOOSH!
THEN LET THE AVENGERS VANISH!
WAVES OF RIPPLING COLOR BLOOM AND BURST, SWIRLING BEFORE THE RISING SUN... AND IT IS DONE!

OR IS IT?
I'M-- STILL HERE! I WASN'T TRANSPORTED!
WH-WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR ME, KANG?

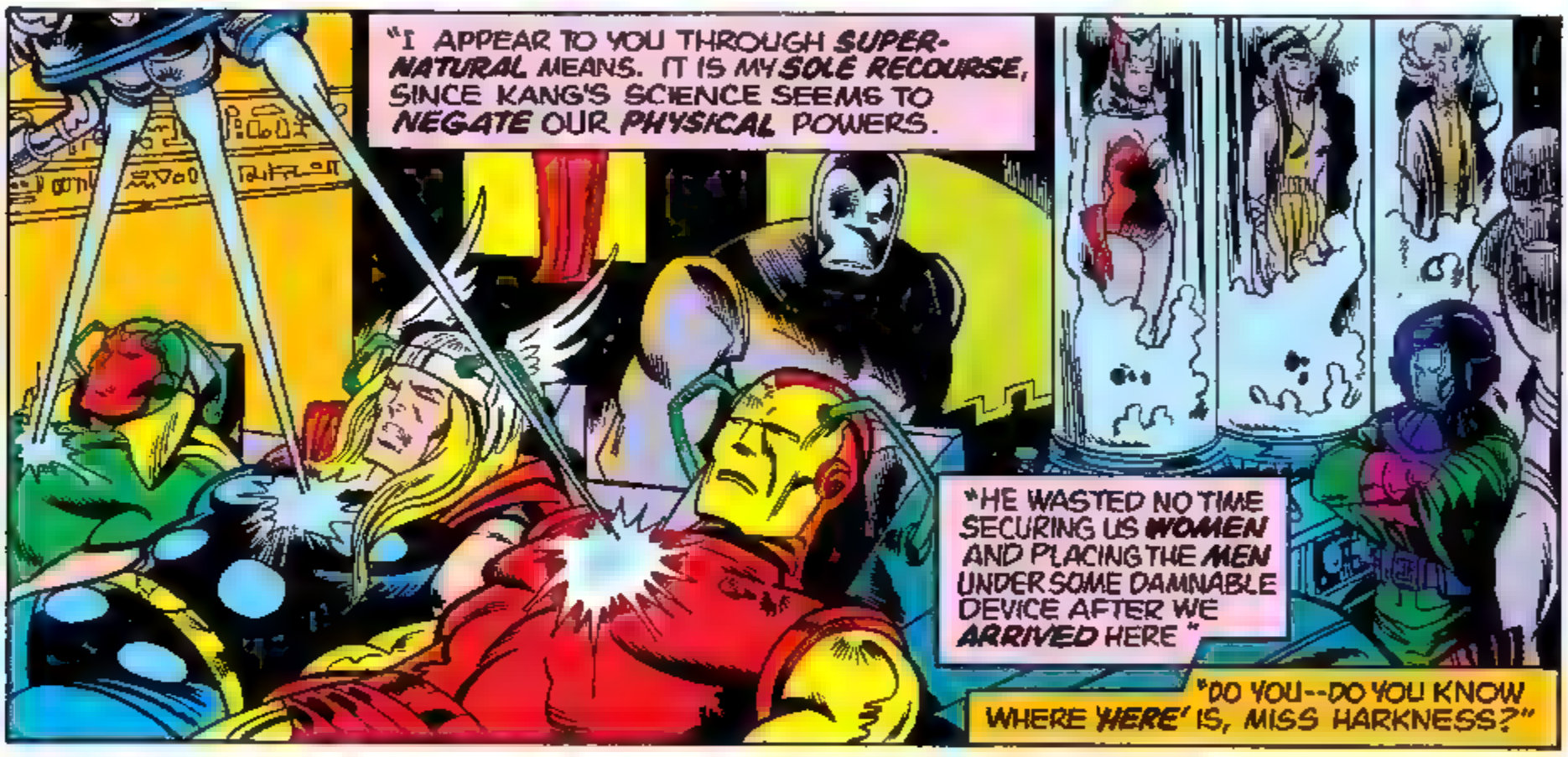
YOU, SWORDSMAN?
YOU ARE A WEAKLING AND A BLUNDERER-- WHILE MY PLANS CALL FOR POWERFUL MALE AVENGERS!
THUS, I PLAN NOTHING FOR YOU BUT A SCORNFUL FAREWELL!
AND HE IS GONE--

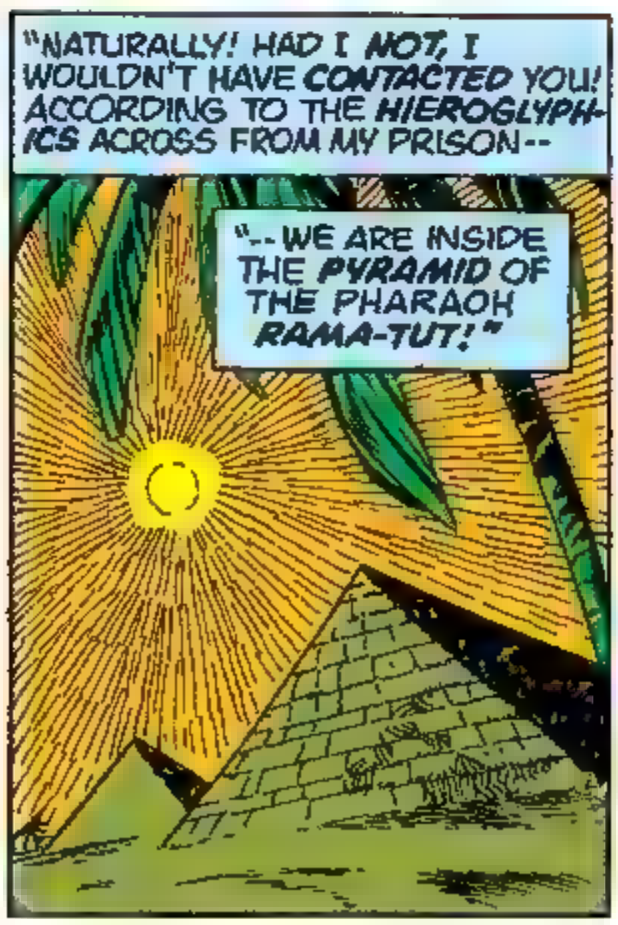
--LEAVING A MAN TORMENTED AND TOTTERING ON THE BRINK OF MADNESS!
HE --DIDN'T EVEN CARE ABOUT ME! HE THUMBED HIS NOSE AT ME, LIKE I WAS NOTHING!
BLAST YOU, KANG! YOU'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO!

BUT -- WHERE DO I START? I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE'S TAKEN THE OTHERS!
THINK, AVENGER, THINK! THERE MUST BE A WAY!

YET AS HE STANDS THERE UNDER THE LURID LIGHT OF THE SIGNAL STAR, THE SWORDSMAN'S MIND MIGHT AS WELL BE MUSH!
TOO MUCH HAS HAPPENED TO ME TONIGHT! I CAN'T CONCENTRATE--
--WHAT'S THAT? A NEW GLOW--!

IT IS I, AGATHA HARKNESS!
NO! IT CAN'T BE!
YOU'RE KANG'S PRISONER!
I AM FAR MORE THAN THAT, YOUNG MAN!


"I APPEAR TO YOU THROUGH SUPER-NATURAL MEANS. IT IS MY SOLE RECOURSE, SINCE KANG'S SCIENCE SEEMS TO NEGATE OUR PHYSICAL POWERS.
"HE WASTED NO TIME SECURING US WOMEN AND PLACING THE MEN UNDER SOME DAMNABLE DEVICE AFTER WE ARRIVED HERE."
"DO YOU--DO YOU KNOW WHERE 'HERE' IS, MISS HARKNESS?"


"NATURALLY! HAD I NOT, I WOULDN'T HAVE CONTACTED YOU! ACCORDING TO THE HIEROGLYPHICS ACROSS FROM MY PRISON--
"--WE ARE INSIDE THE PYRAMID OF THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT!"

I SHALL MENTALLY GUIDE YOU HERE, SWORDSMAN --BUT HURRY! I KNOW I AM NO MAN'S BRIDE --
--YET MY WANDA AND YOUR MANTIS MAY SUFFER AT THIS SAVAGE'S HANDS!

YOU DON'T NEED TO REMIND ME, LADY! "MY" MANTIS MAY DESPISE ME NOW--JUST AS KANG DESPISES ME--
--BUT THE SWORDSMAN'S GOING TO SURPRISE THEM ALL!

"MY" MANTIS! "MY" MANTIS! EVEN NOW, SHE'S ALMOST ALL I CAN THINK OF! THE WAY SHE CUT ME COLD, WITHOUT EVEN A PARTING GLANCE--!

YOU GONNA BE OKAY, JARVIS?

YES -- YESSIR.

GOOD!

"MY" MANTIS! DOES KANG WANT HER NOW, LIKE I STILL DO?

WHAT WITH ALL THE MYSTERY SURROUNDING HER PAST--

--IT'S EASY TO BELIEVE THIS IS TIED IN, TOO!

BUT HOW CAN A-- A CELESTIAL MADONNA, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD--

--HOW CAN SOMEONE LIKE THAT HAVE A KNOWN BACK-GROUND AS CHEAP AS HERS?

SHE LED ME ON LIKE A TWO-BIT TRAMP -- TOLD ME I WAS HER MAN AND THEN QUIT ME--

--QUIT ME TO CHASE AFTER WANDA'S MAN!

"LORD, WE WERE SO HAPPY IN VIET NAM! SHE SAVED MY LIFE -- GAVE ME BACK MY SELF-RESPECT -- AND EVEN PUSHED ME TO REJOIN THE AVENGERS!

"SHE SEEMED SO LOVING, SO DEVOTED--"

--BUT THAT WAS A LIE, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN MY LIFE!

I-- I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS!

AND THE DESPERATE LOOK IN THE SWORDSMAN'S EYES ONLY INCREASES AS HE BROOD-INGLY JETS TOWARD EGYPT. THE TIME SLIPS BY HIM, UNNOTICED, UNTIL --

uh?

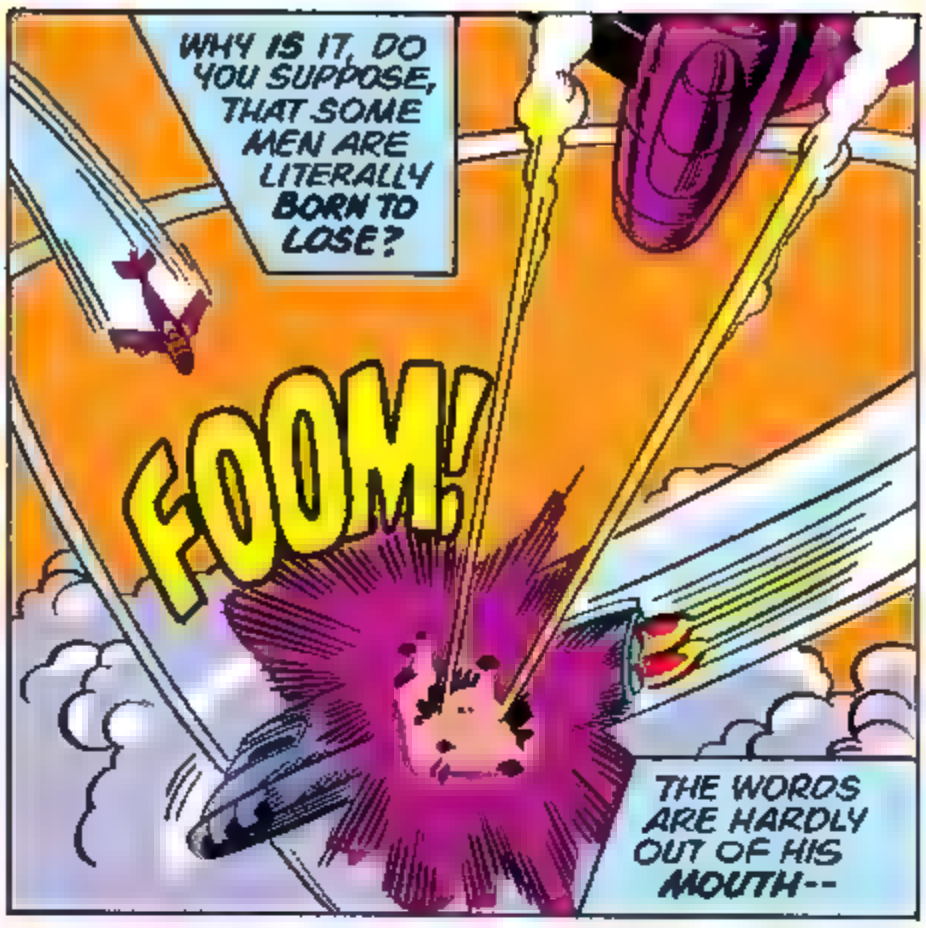
I'M HERE, ALREADY!

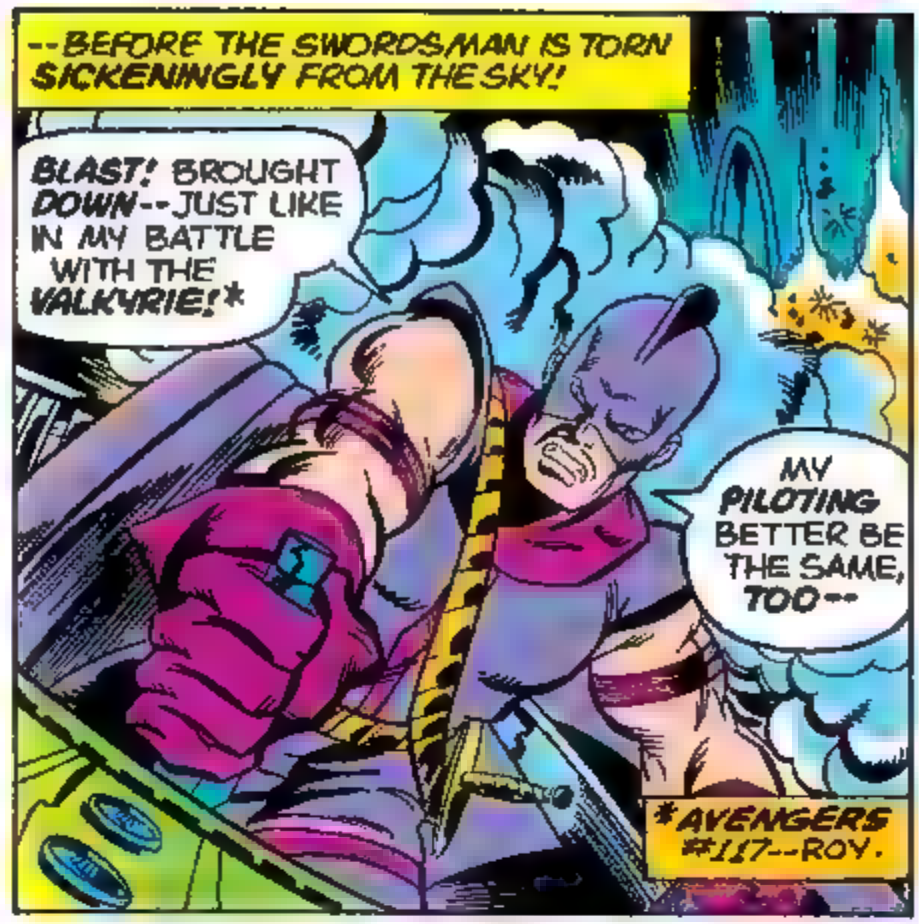
hmmm... AND IT LOOKS LIKE I'VE VIOLATED SOMEBODY'S AIR SPACE AGAIN!

WHY COULDN'T THE AVENGERS HAVE TELEPORTATION, LIKE KANG--

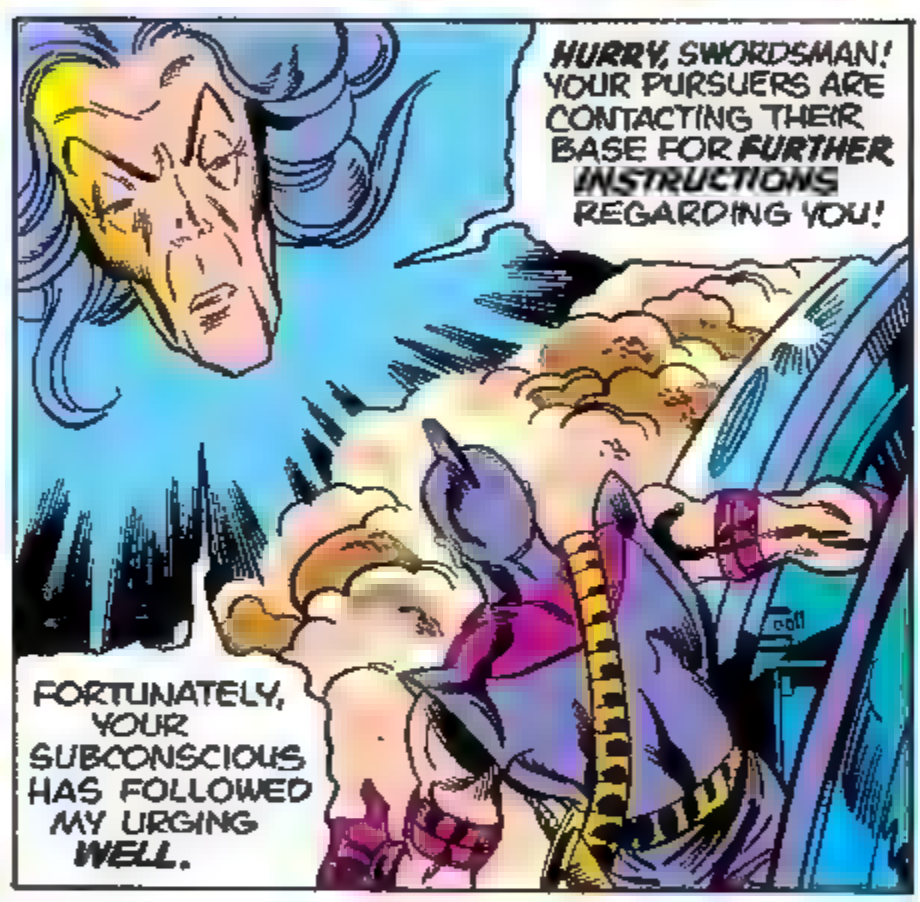
--INSTEAD OF MAKING ME FIGHT MY WAY IN?

SAVE THE LEGAL NICETIES FOR KISSINGER, BOYS! NOBODY'S HOLDING ME BACK!


WHY IS IT, DO YOU SUPPOSE, THAT SOME MEN ARE LITERALLY BORN TO LOSE?
FOOM!
THE WORDS ARE HARDLY OUT OF HIS MOUTH--


--BEFORE THE SWORDSMAN IS TORN SICKENINGLY FROM THE SKY!
BLAST! BROUGHT DOWN--JUST LIKE IN MY BATTLE WITH THE VALKYRIE!*
MY PILOTING BETTER BE THE SAME, TOO--
*AVENGERS #117--ROY.

-- BECAUSE I'M IN FOR ANOTHER PANCAKE LANDING!
SKEE-UMP!


HURRY, SWORDSMAN! YOUR PURSUERS ARE CONTACTING THEIR BASE FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING YOU!
FORTUNATELY, YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS HAS FOLLOWED MY URGING WELL.

YOU HAVE ARRIVED--ahhhh!
MISS HARKNESS! WHAT IS IT?

SHE'S GONE! SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HER!
I HAVE TO REACH THEM--FAST!

WHILE, IN A CHAMBER DEEP WITHIN THE PYRAMID'S DUSTY CONFINES...

THE SWORDSMAN-- DIRECTLY OUTSIDE THIS TOMB!

HE COULD NEVER HAVE FOUND ME WITHOUT ASSISTANCE-- ASSISTANCE HE'S BEEN CONSIDERATE ENOUGH TO NAME!

I THOUGHT YOU MAINTAINED TOO SERENE A SILENCE SINCE YOU AWAKENED, OLD WOMAN!

HOWEVER YOU MANAGED TO LEAD HIM HERE, YOU SHALL MANAGE IT NO LONGER!

AGGGH!

NO ONE DECEIVES KANG! DO YOU HEAR: NO ONE!

WHAT MATTER IF THE FOP HAS REACHED THE PYRAMID OF RAMA-TUT? IT IS TOO WELL DESIGNED FOR HIM TO FIND THIS CHAMBER!

OF THAT I AM CERTAIN--

--FOR I OVERSAW ITS CONSTRUCTION!

AH--EVEN PINNED BENEATH MY PARALYRAY, YOU START WITH SURPRISE AT THAT!

THEN PERMIT ME TO ENLIGHTEN YOU, AVENGERS!

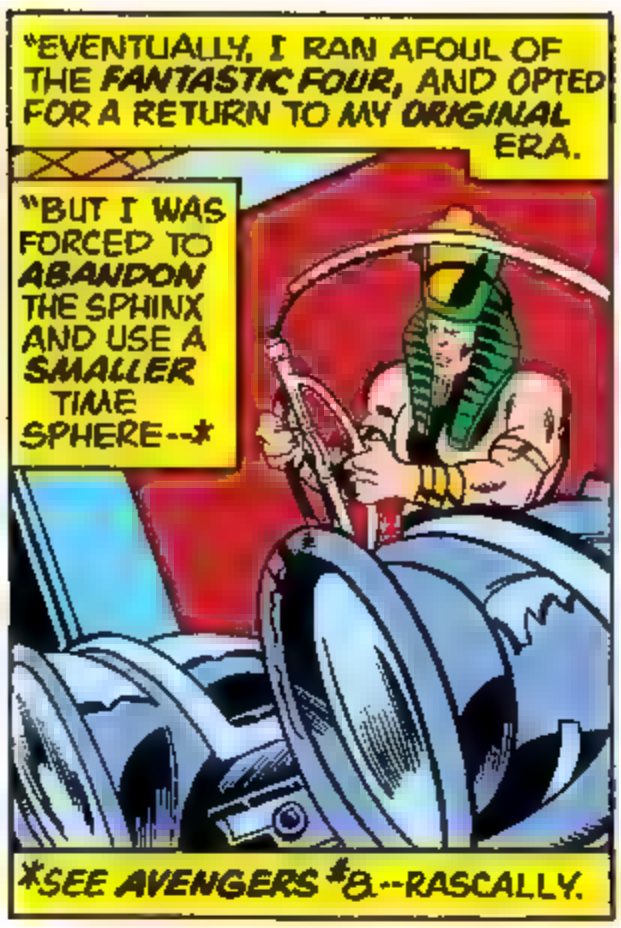
"I WAS BORN IN THE 31ST CENTURY -- A TIME OF PEACE AND PROGRESS, AND A TIME WHICH I LOATHED! MY ESCAPE CAME WHEN I STUMBLED ACROSS A TIME MACHINE!*

*DETERMINED TO FIND EARLIER, MORE ADVENTUROUS TIMES, I REBUILT THE DEVICE IN THE FORM OF A SPHINX--

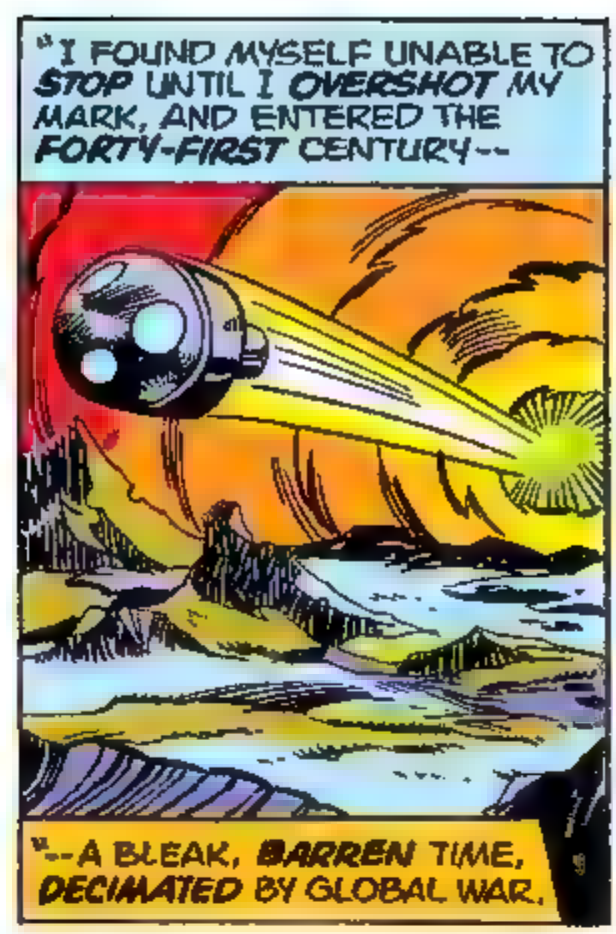
*SEE FANTASTIC FOUR #19.--ROY.

--AND TRAVELED TO ANCIENT EGYPT, WHERE MY INEXPLICABLE APPEARANCE STUNNED THE NATIVES INTO COWED SUBMISSION, JUST AS I PLANNED!

"I BECAME PHARAOH RAMA-TUT!


"EVENTUALLY, I RAN AFOUL OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, AND OPTED FOR A RETURN TO MY ORIGINAL ERA.
"BUT I WAS FORCED TO ABANDON THE SPHINX AND USE A SMALLER TIME SPHERE--*
*SEE AVENGERS #8--RASCALLY.

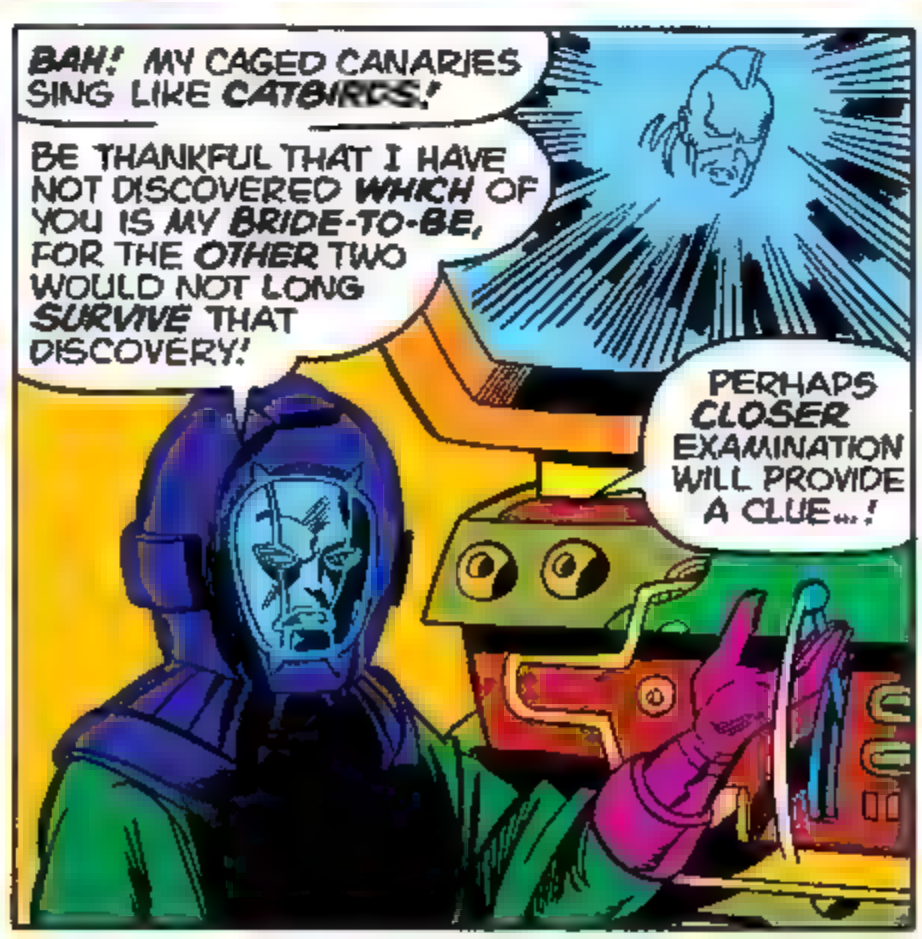
"--WHICH COULD NOT WELL WITHSTAND THE DISTURBANCES OF THE TIME STREAM --
"--AND SUFFERED A TEMPORARY MECHANICAL FAILURE.


"I FOUND MYSELF UNABLE TO STOP UNTIL I OVERSHOT MY MARK, AND ENTERED THE FORTY-FIRST CENTURY--
"--A BLEAK, BARREN TIME, DECIMATED BY GLOBAL WAR.

"MEN OF THAT TIME ARE BARBARIANS, STILL FIGHTING FOR LONG-FORGOTTEN CAUSES WITH WEAPONS THEY NO LONGER COMPREHEND. IT WAS AS SIMPLE TO BEND THEM TO MY WILL AS IT WAS THE EGYPTIANS--
"--AND I BECAME KANG!

BUT I WEARIED OF RULING SERFS! I NEEDED FRESH CONQUESTS, OVER MORE VIRILE MEN--
--AND THUS, I BEGAN MY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!

IF YOU SEEK MEN, WARRIOR, THEN YOU WILL NOT FEAR TO FREE THIS ONE!
LET US BOTH LOOSE, KANG--AND WE'LL SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO ABOUT CONQUESTS!

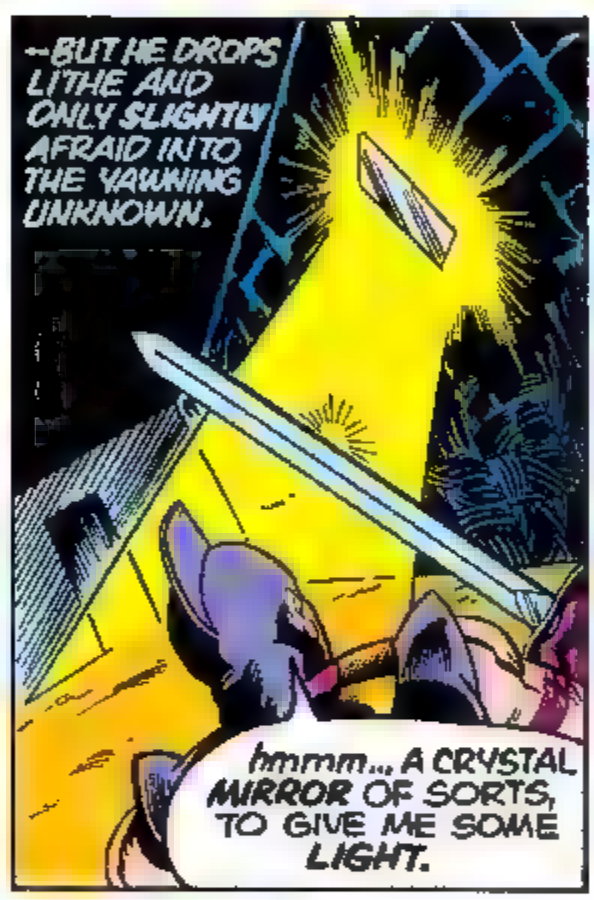

BAH! MY CAGED CANARIES SING LIKE CATBIRDS!
BE THANKFUL THAT I HAVE NOT DISCOVERED WHICH OF YOU IS MY BRIDE-TO-BE, FOR THE OTHER TWO WOULD NOT LONG SURVIVE THAT DISCOVERY!
PERHAPS CLOSER EXAMINATION WILL PROVIDE A CLUE...!

SO A SWITCH IS INDOLENTLY THROWN, AND THE SWORDSMAN FADES FROM KANG'S VIEWSCREEN...
...AN ACT THE CONQUEROR WILL HAVE REASON TO REGRET.
OKAY, I HAVE TO GET INTO THIS BABY--
--AND LORD KNOWS, THOSE PHARAOHS DID THEIR BEST TO PREVENT JUST THAT!

BUT I SPENT A LOT OF YEARS BUMMING AROUND THE WORLD, HIRING MYSELF OUT FOR ANY DIRTY JOB THAT WAS AT HAND--
--AND ONCE OR TWICE--

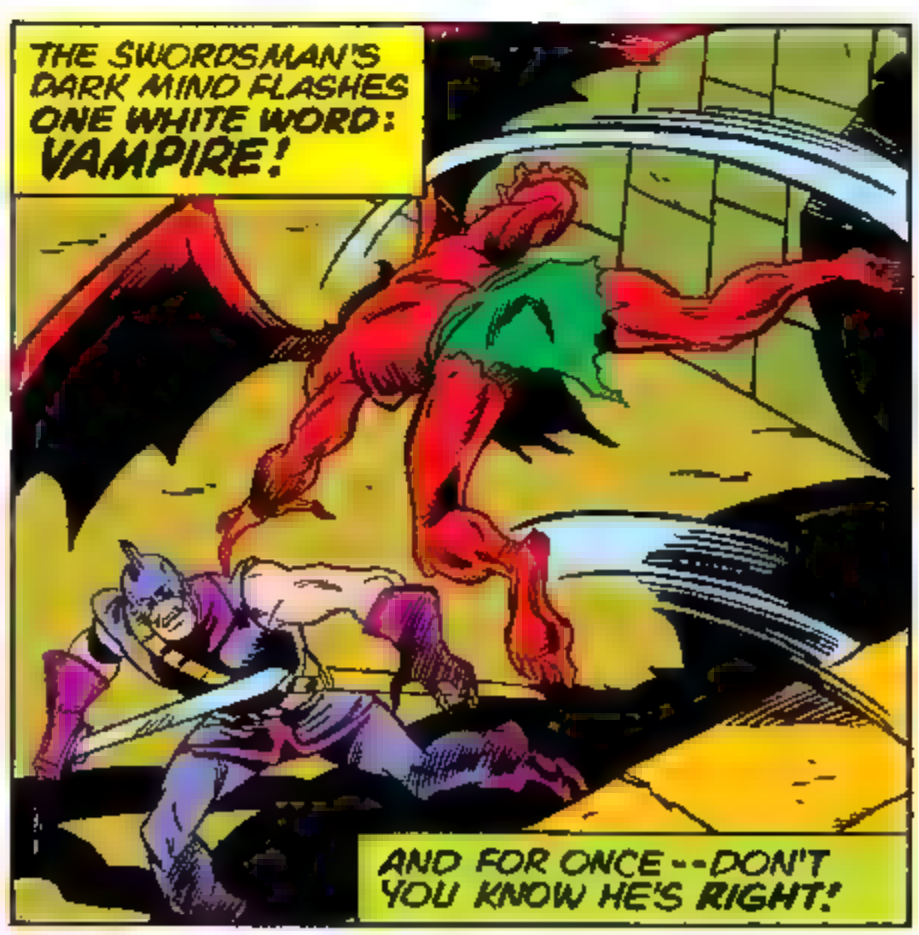
A FLICKERING BLAST BURSTS FROM HIS BLADE HILT!
--THAT INCLUDED PYRAMID ROBBING!

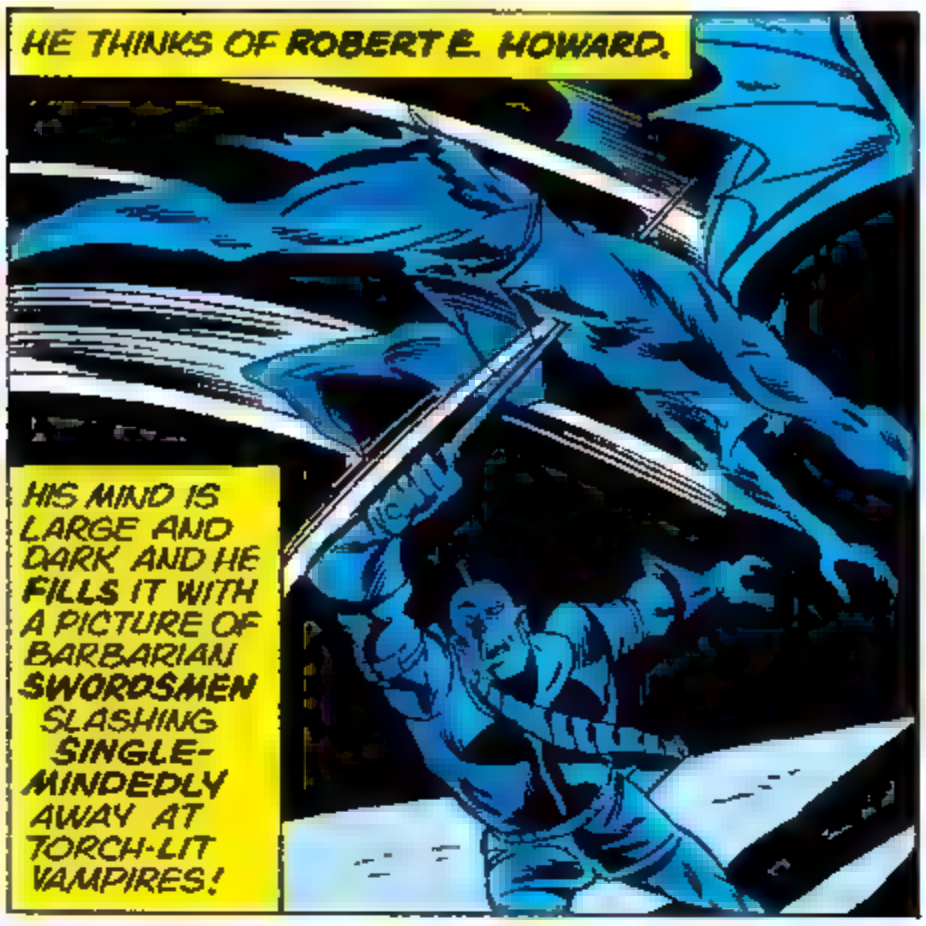
THAT WAS THE KEY BLOCK, ALL RIGHT!
I GUESS THAT PART OF MY LIFE WASN'T ENTIRELY WASTED!
DRY, MUSTY AIR BILLOWS PAST HIM FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE TOMB...

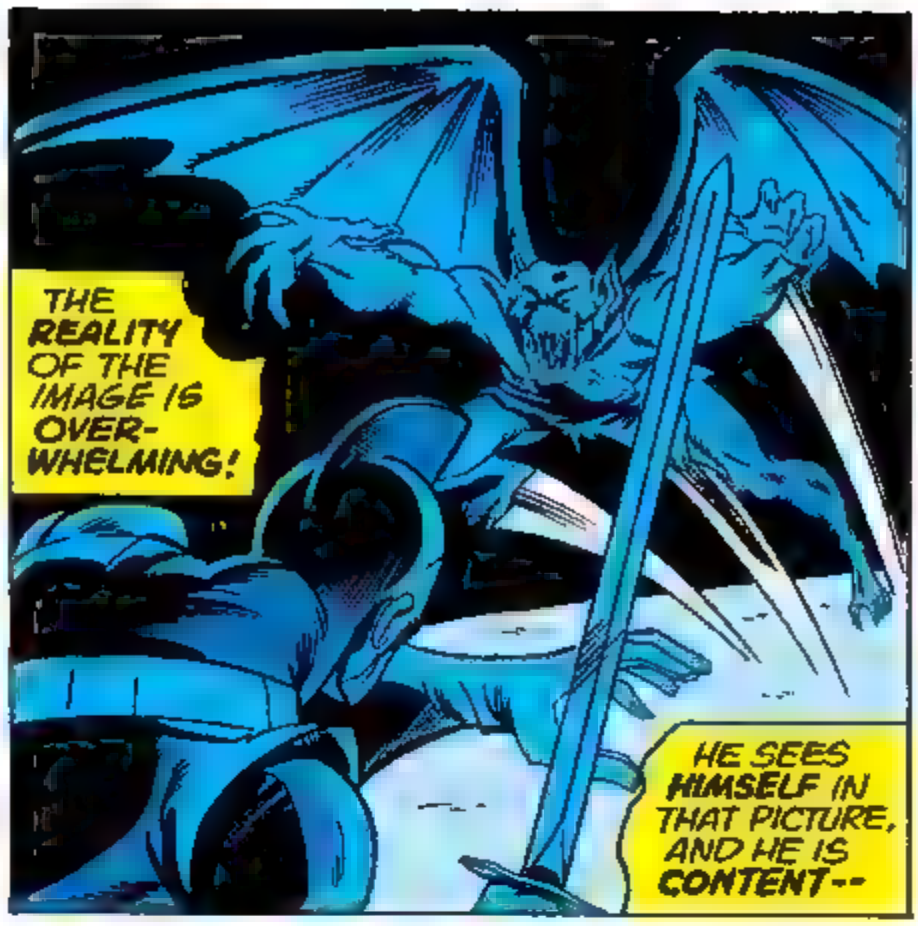

--BUT HE DROPS LITHE AND ONLY SLIGHTLY AFRAID INTO THE YAWNING UNKNOWN.
hmmm... A CRYSTAL MIRROR OF SORTS, TO GIVE ME SOME LIGHT.

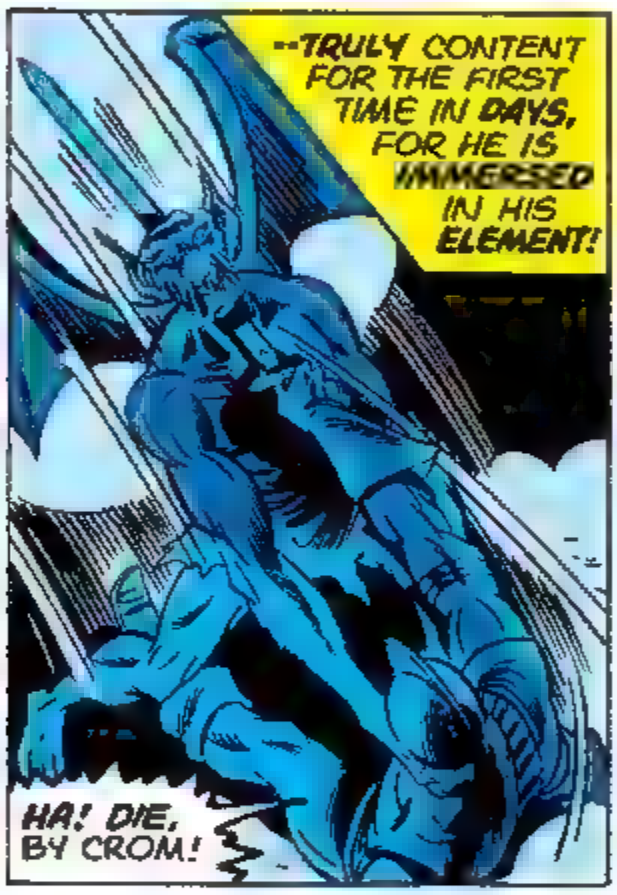
IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, THE PYRAMID BUILDERS WERE PRETTY INGENIOUS IN BRINGING LIGHT IN FOR THEIR CONSTRUCTION--
SSSK!
BEHIND ME-- WHAT--?

THERE SHOULD BE NOTHING ALIVE IN THIS TOMB!
SINCE THE TIME OF RAMA-TUT'S DISAPPEARANCE FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THIS SHRINE HAS SEEN NEITHER AIR NOR WATER!


THE SWORDSMAN'S DARK MIND FLASHES ONE WHITE WORD: VAMPIRE!
AND FOR ONCE--DON'T YOU KNOW HE'S RIGHT!


HE THINKS OF ROBERT E. HOWARD.
HIS MIND IS LARGE AND DARK AND HE FILLS IT WITH A PICTURE OF BARBARIAN SWORDSMEN SLASHING SINGLE-MINDEDLY AWAY AT TORCH-LIT VAMPIRES!

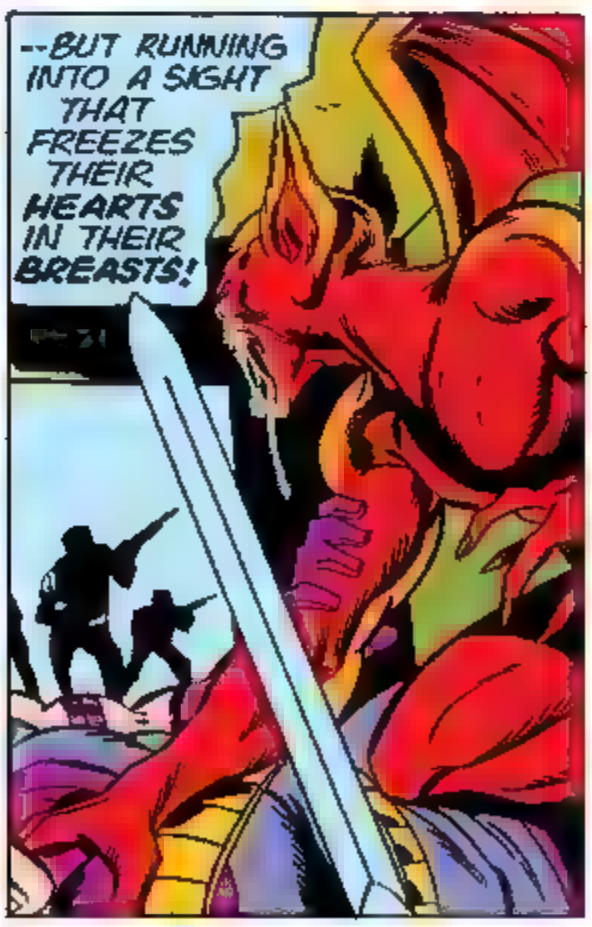

THE REALITY OF THE IMAGE IS OVER-WHELMING!
HE SEES HIMSELF IN THAT PICTURE, AND HE IS CONTENT--

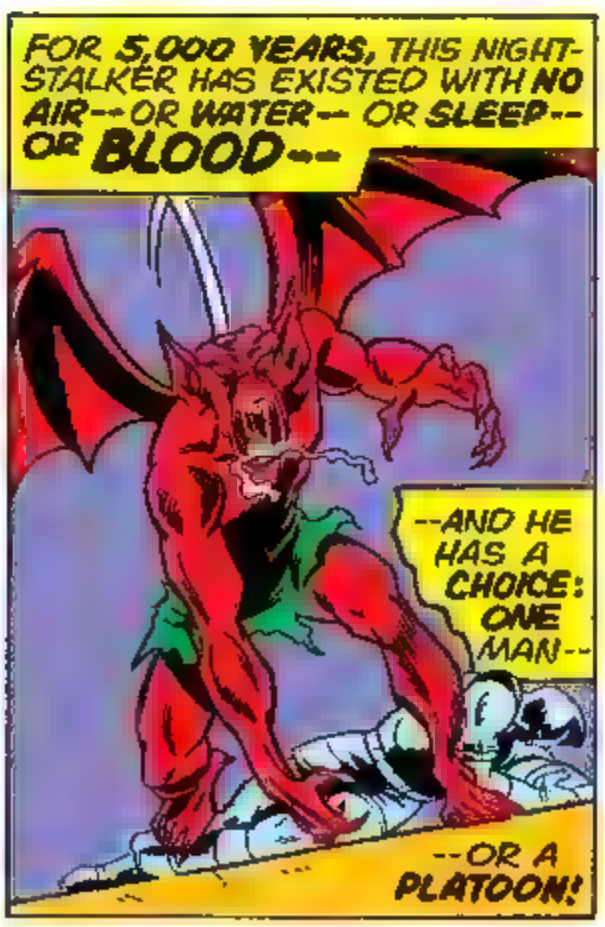

--TRULY CONTENT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN DAYS, FOR HE IS IMMERSED IN HIS ELEMENT!
HA! DIE, BY CROM!

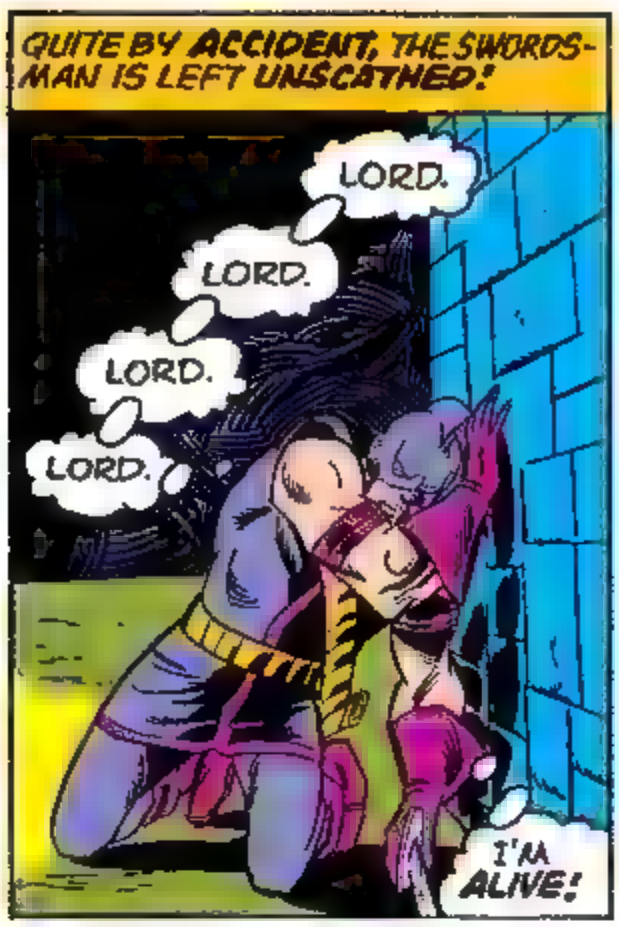
IMAGINE HIS SHOCK WHEN HIS CALM KILLING STROKE GOES UNNOTICED, AND THE PALE GUARDIAN OF RAMA-TUT'S TOMB--
--TOPPLES HIM OVER BACKWARDS--

--AND HOT, SLAVERING, DOUBLE-FANGED JAWS SNAP AT HIS THROAT!
HE CRIES OUT IN ANGUISH--

--AND HIS CRY IS UNBELIEVABLY ANSWERED!
A PLATOON OF EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS HAVE COME, DETERMINED TO BRING HIM IN--


--BUT RUNNING INTO A SIGHT THAT FREEZES THEIR HEARTS IN THEIR BREASTS!

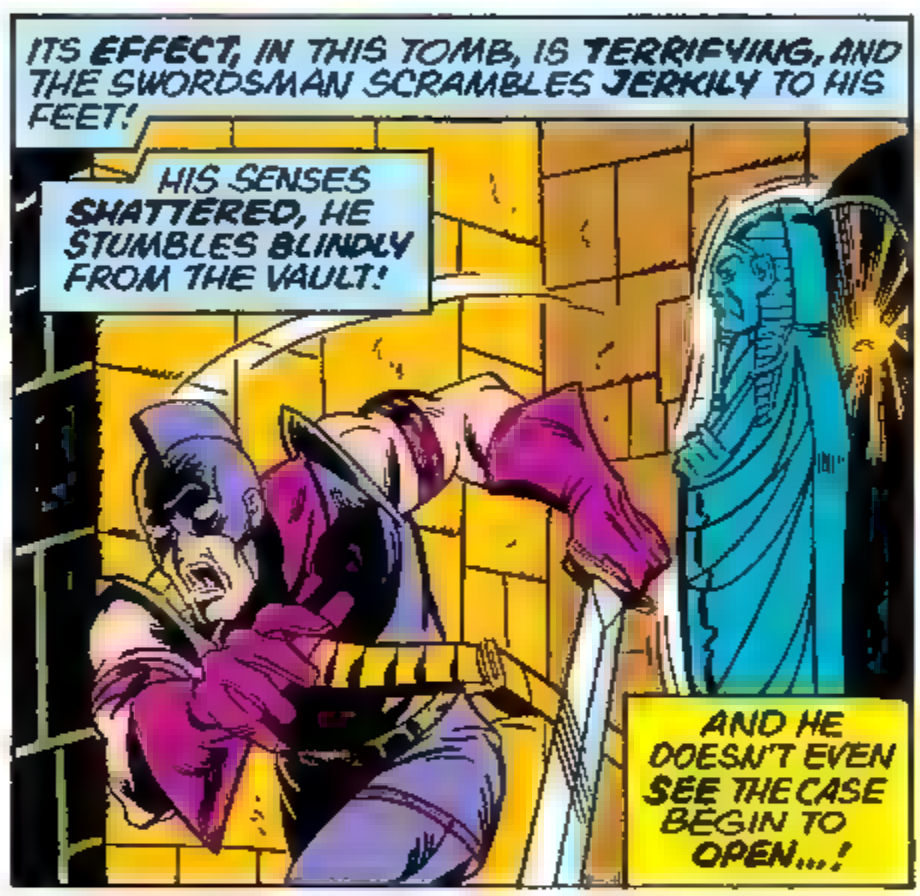

FOR 5,000 YEARS, THIS NIGHT-STALKER HAS EXISTED WITH NO AIR--OR WATER-- OR SLEEP-- OR BLOOD--
--AND HE HAS A CHOICE: ONE MAN--
--OR A PLATOON!

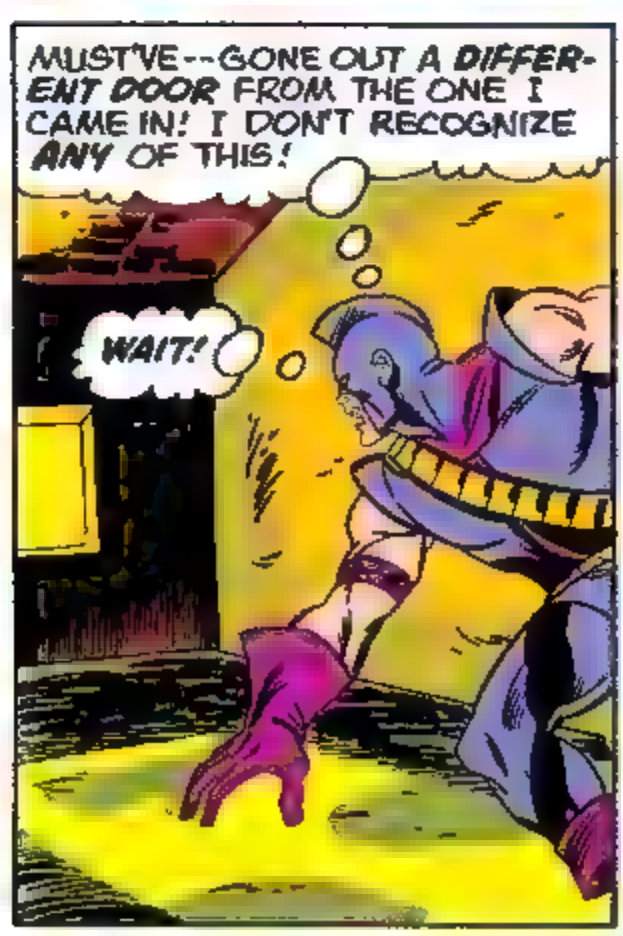

QUITE BY ACCIDENT, THE SWORDSMAN IS LEFT UNSCATHED!
LORD.
LORD.
LORD.
LORD.
I'M ALIVE!

I'M AAAAAAA

THE WALL--SWUNG OPEN AS I LEANED---
--SECRET PASSAGE MAYBE--
AAAAA

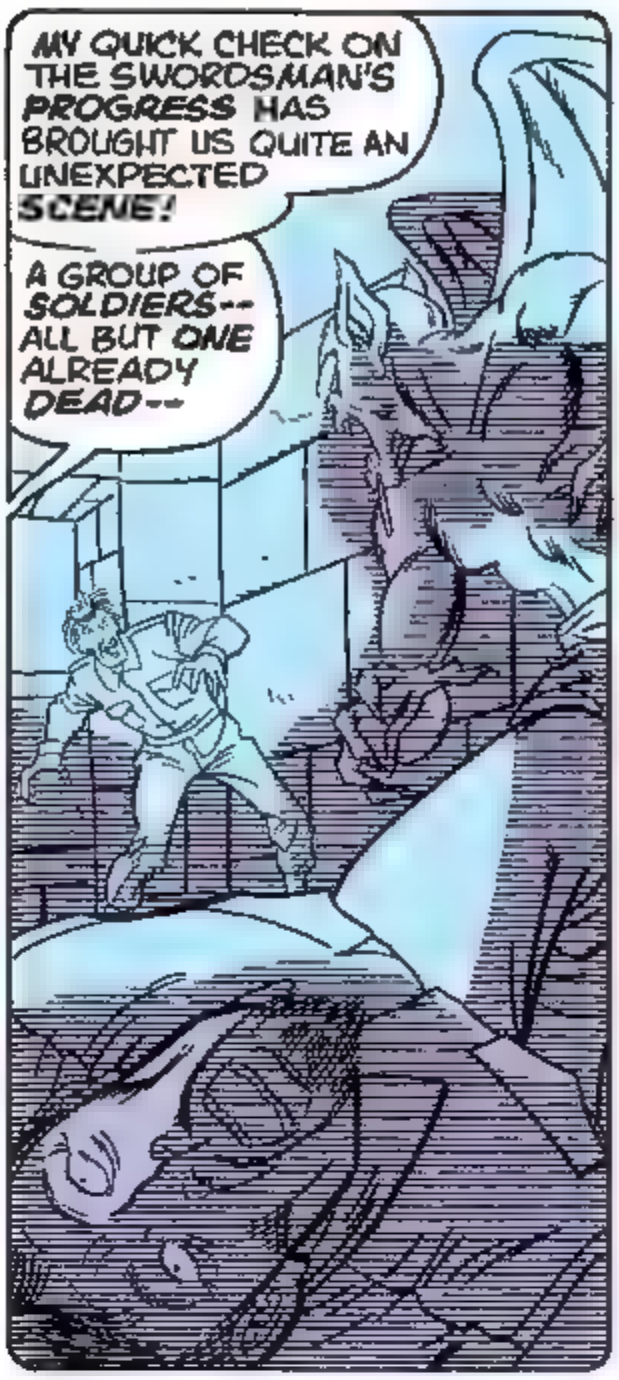
A SECOND MIRROR, CUNNINGLY PLACED, TAKES THE DIM BEAM OF SUNLIGHT FROM THE FIRST ONE--
--AND HURLS IT GRAY AND GHASTLY ACROSS THE ANCIENT MUMMY CASE.

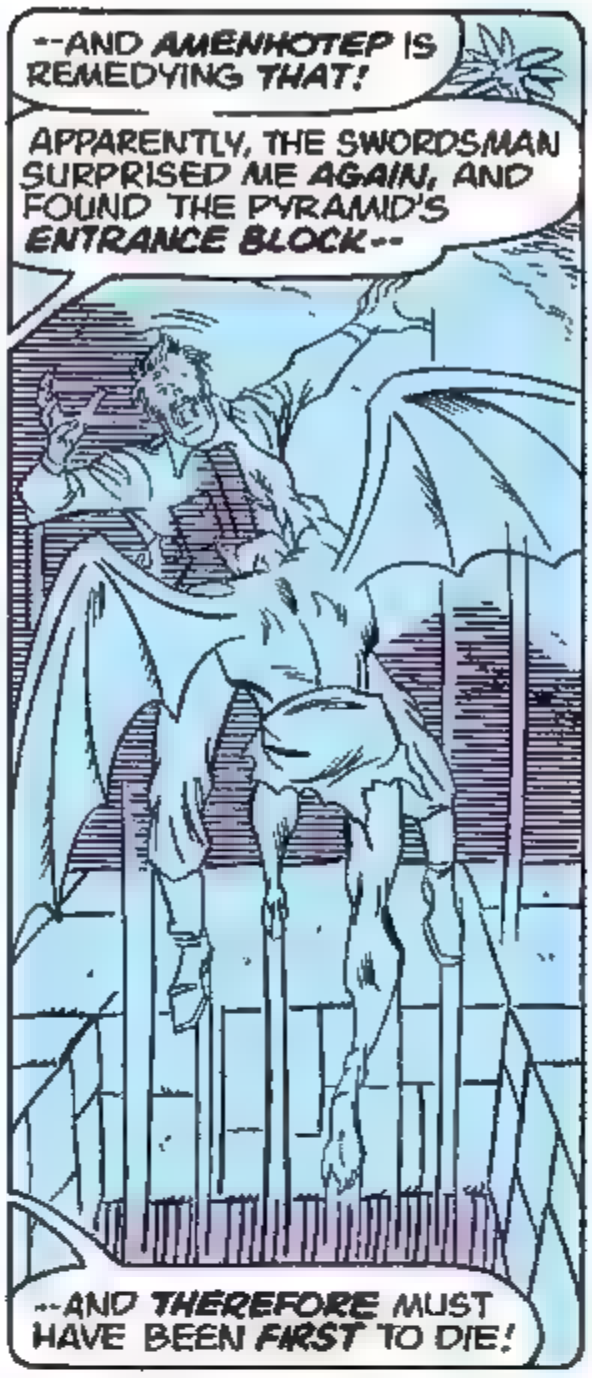

ITS EFFECT, IN THIS TOMB, IS TERRIFYING, AND THE SWORDSMAN SCRAMBLES JERKILY TO HIS FEET!
HIS SENSES SHATTERED, HE STUMBLES BLINDLY FROM THE VAULT!
AND HE DOESN'T EVEN SEE THE CASE BEGIN TO OPEN...!

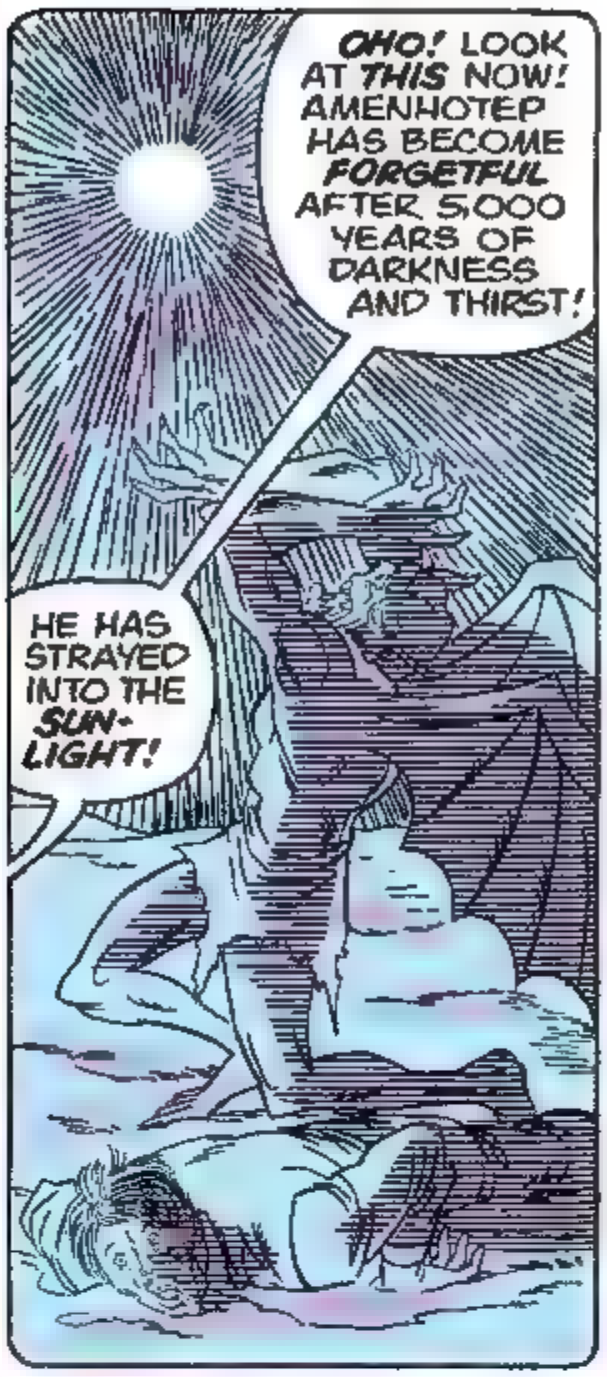

MUST'VE--GONE OUT A DIFFERENT DOOR FROM THE ONE I CAME IN! I DON'T RECOGNIZE ANY OF THIS!
WAIT!

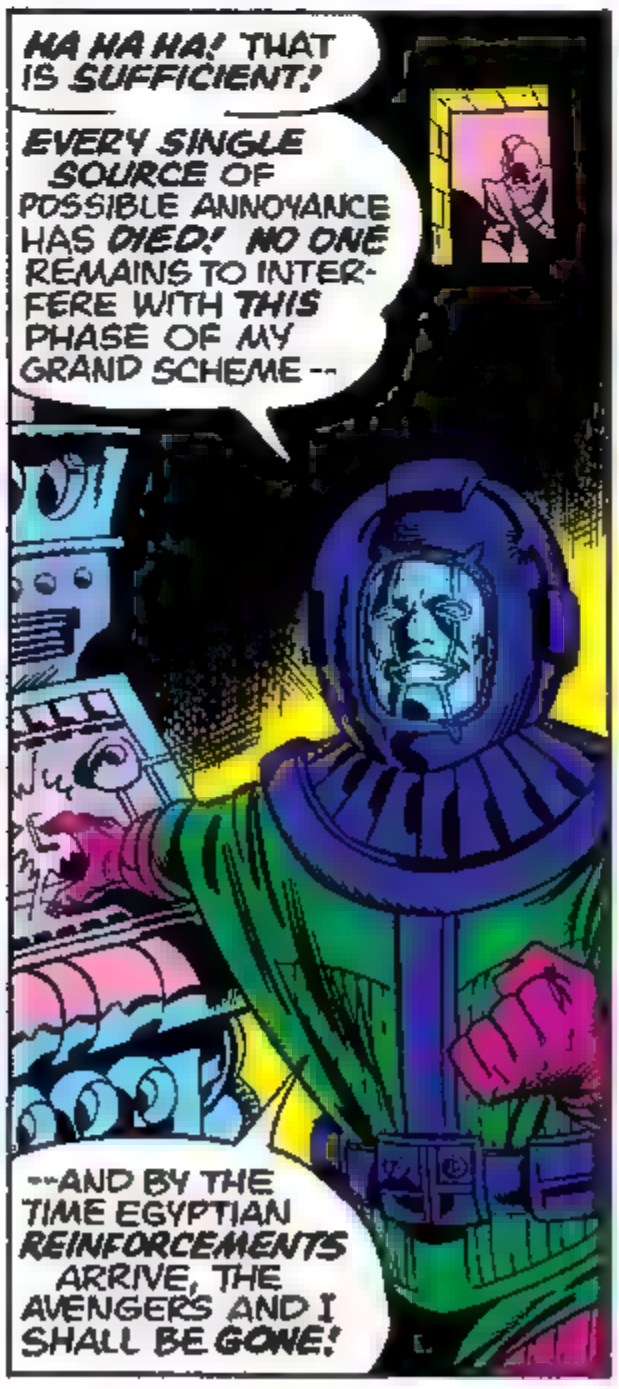
SO THEY LOOSED OLD AMENHOTEP AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES! MARVELOUS!
KANG'S VOICE--
--AND LIGHT!

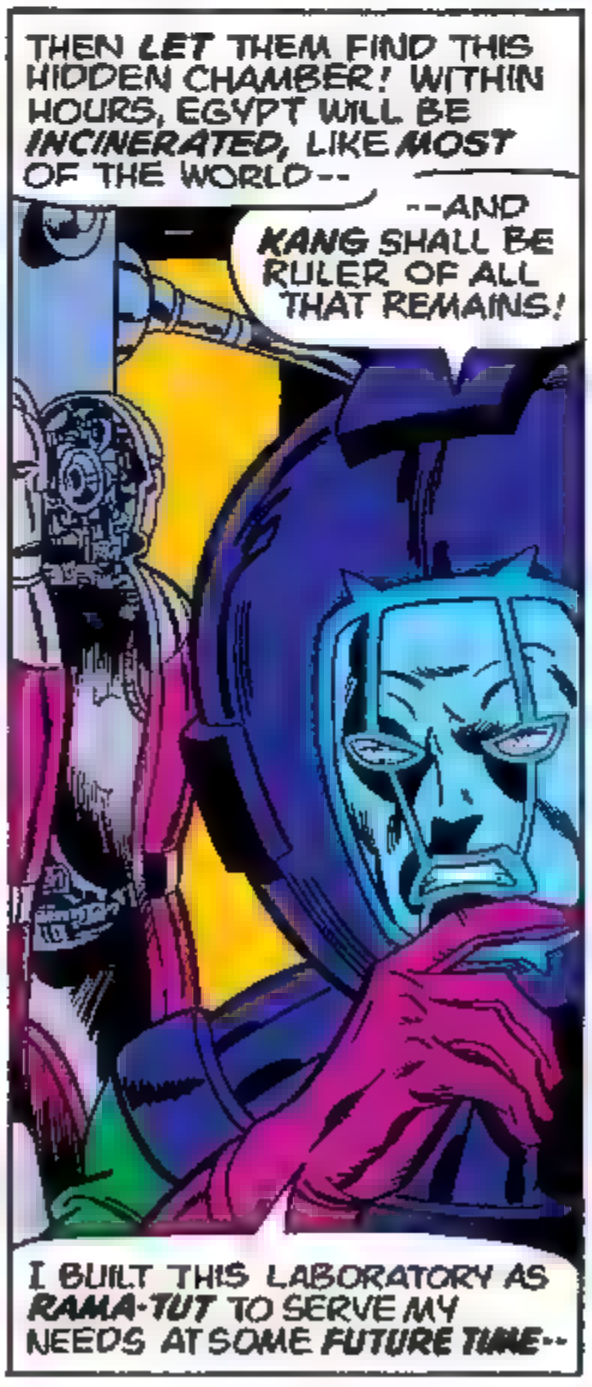
I'VE FOUND HIM!
WHEN I FORCED HIM TO DRINK THE NECTAR OF THE UNDEAD, I WOULDN'T HAVE BET HE'D SURVIVE A CENTURY, LADIES!


MY QUICK CHECK ON THE SWORDSMAN'S PROGRESS HAS BROUGHT US QUITE AN UNEXPECTED SCENE!
A GROUP OF SOLDIERS-- ALL BUT ONE ALREADY DEAD--


--AND AMENHOTEP IS REMEDYING THAT!
APPARENTLY, THE SWORDSMAN SURPRISED ME AGAIN, AND FOUND THE PYRAMID'S ENTRANCE BLOCK--
--AND THEREFORE MUST HAVE BEEN FIRST TO DIE!

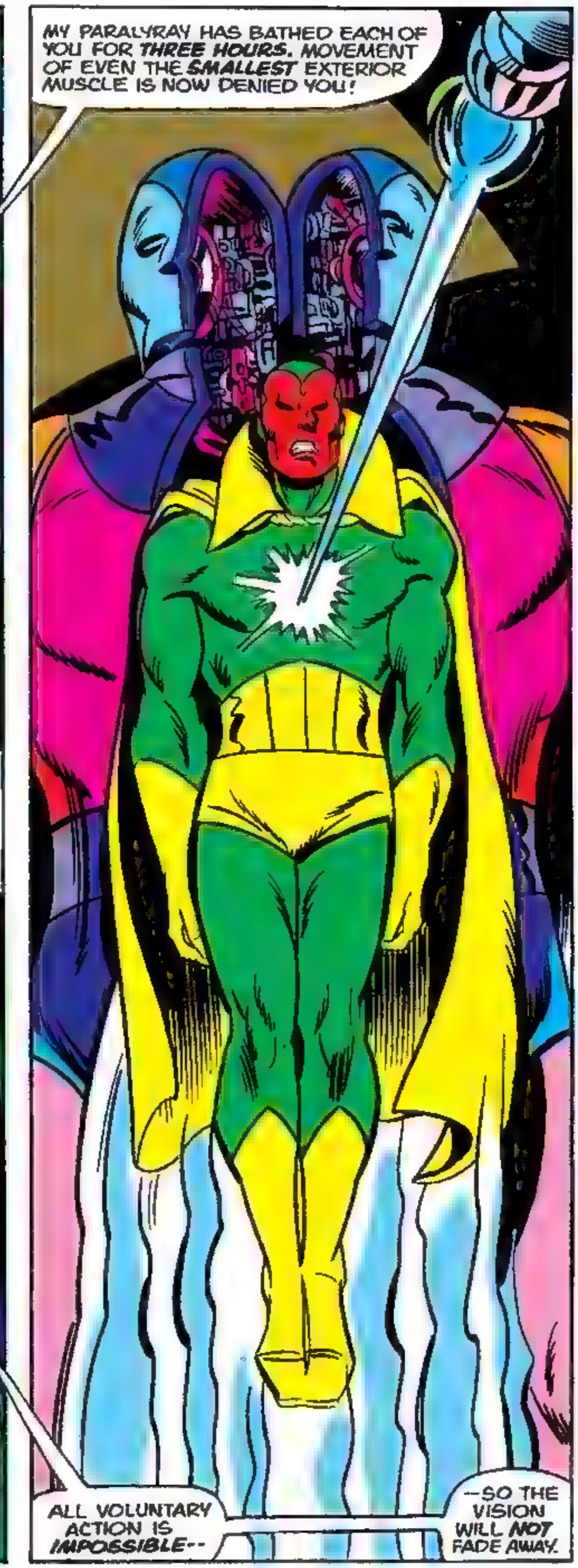

OHO! LOOK AT THIS NOW! AMENHOTEP HAS BECOME FORGETFUL AFTER 5,000 YEARS OF DARKNESS AND THIRST!
HE HAS STRAYED INTO THE SUN-LIGHT!

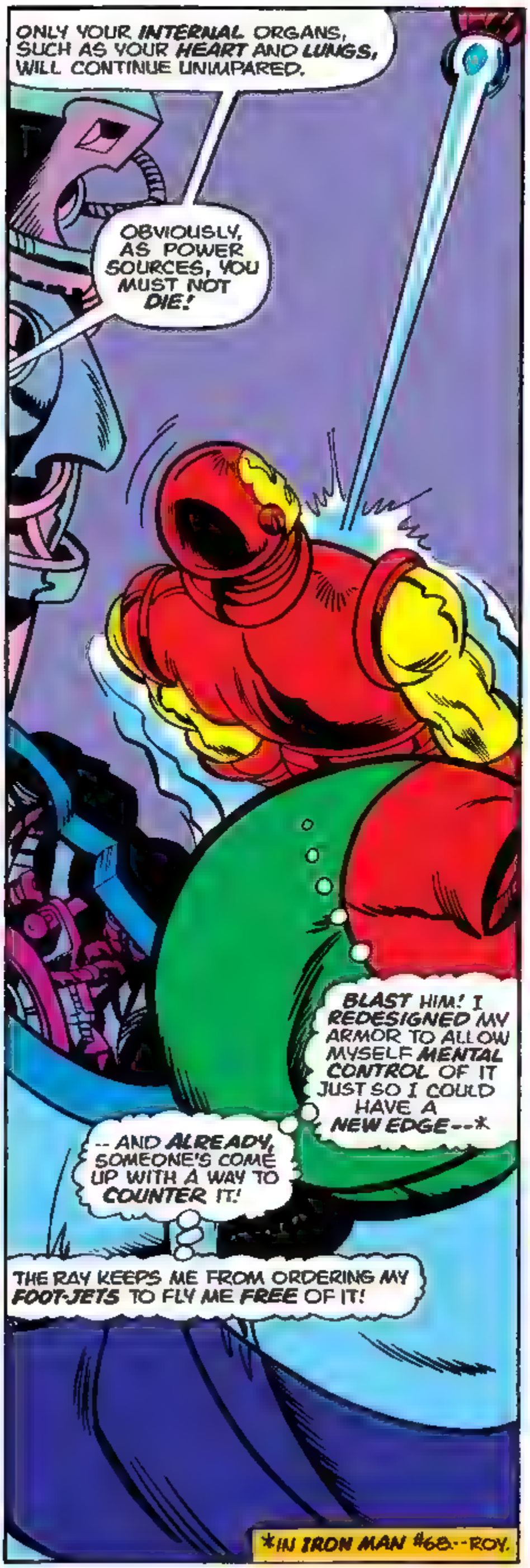

HA HA HA! THAT IS SUFFICIENT!
EVERY SINGLE SOURCE OF POSSIBLE ANNOYANCE HAS DIED! NO ONE REMAINS TO INTER-FERE WITH THIS PHASE OF MY GRAND SCHEME--
--AND BY THE TIME EGYPTIAN REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE, THE AVENGERS AND I SHALL BE GONE!

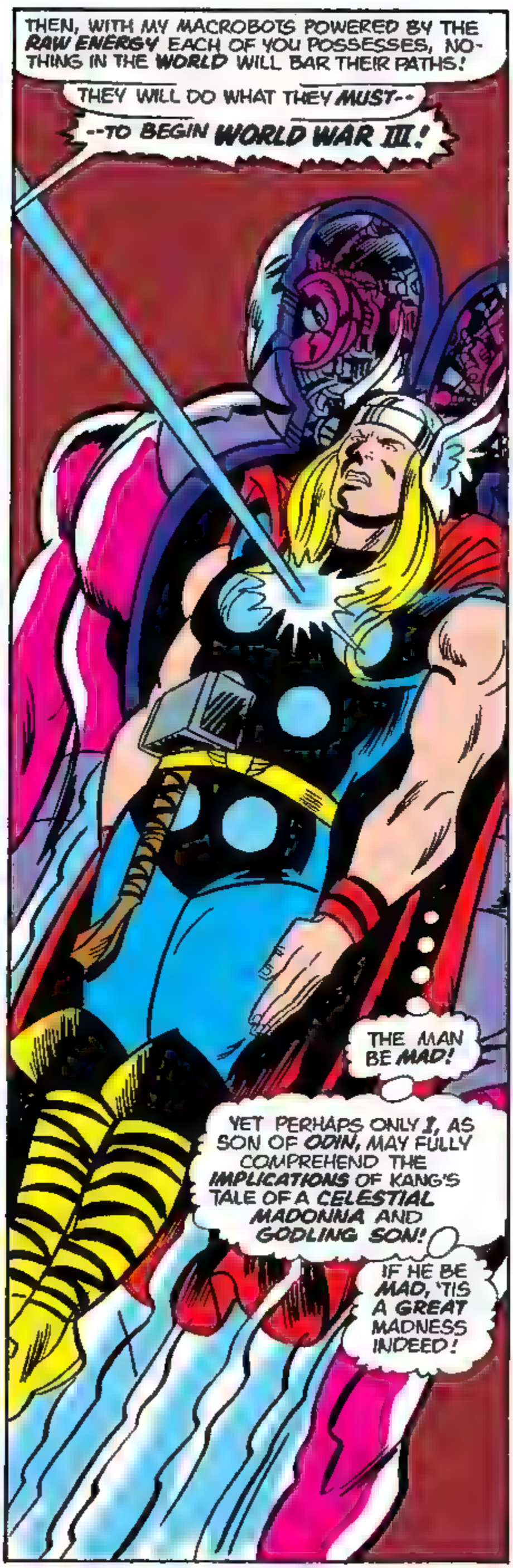

THEN LET THEM FIND THIS HIDDEN CHAMBER! WITHIN HOURS, EGYPT WILL BE INCINERATED, LIKE MOST OF THE WORLD--
--AND KANG SHALL BE RULER OF ALL THAT REMAINS!
I BUILT THIS LABORATORY AS RAMA-TUT TO SERVE MY NEEDS AT SOME FUTURE TIME--

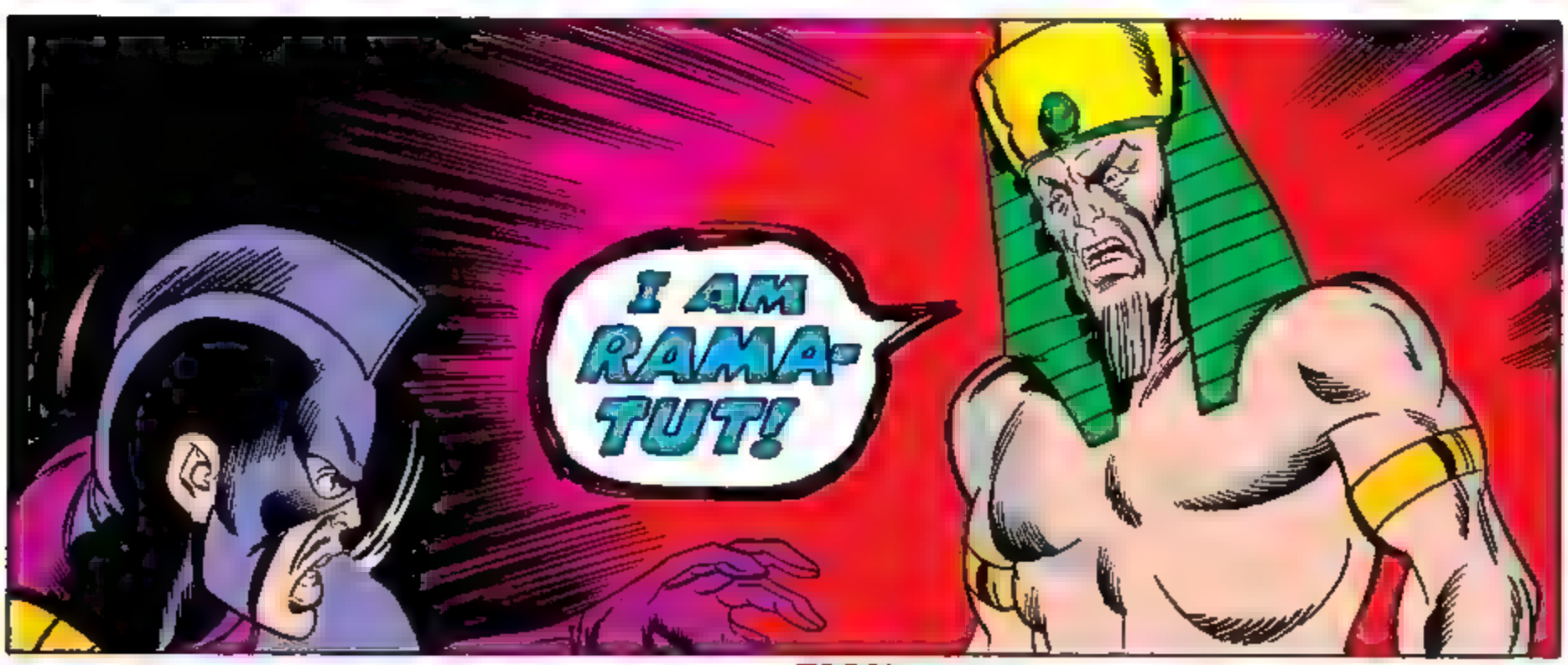
--AND IT HAS CERTAINLY SERVED ME WELL TODAY!
THE HOUR HAS COME!
MY RAYS HAVE DONE THEIR WORK!

NOW, AVENGERS, YOU WILL SEE WHY I CAPTURED YOU THREE MALES IN ADDITION TO MY POSSIBLE BRIDES!
MY THREE MACROBOTS THRIVE ON POWER! ANY POWER TRANSMITTED TO THEM IS AMPLIFIED AND ADDED TO THEIR CAPACITIES!
AND WHERE ARE THERE THREE MORE PERFECT POWER SOURCES, ALL TOGETHER, THAN THE VISION, IRON MAN, AND THOR?


MY PARALYRAY HAS BATHED EACH OF YOU FOR THREE HOURS. MOVEMENT OF EVEN THE SMALLEST EXTERIOR MUSCLE IS NOW DENIED YOU!
ALL VOLUNTARY ACTION IS IMPOSSIBLE--
--SO THE VISION WILL NOT FADE AWAY.


ONLY YOUR INTERNAL ORGANS, SUCH AS YOUR HEART AND LUNGS, WILL CONTINUE UNIMPARED.
OBVIOUSLY, AS POWER SOURCES, YOU MUST NOT DIE!
BLAST HIM! I REDESIGNED MY ARMOR TO ALLOW MYSELF MENTAL CONTROL OF IT JUST SO I COULD HAVE A NEW EDGE--*
-- AND ALREADY, SOMEONE'S COME UP WITH A WAY TO COUNTER IT!
THE RAY KEEPS ME FROM ORDERING MY FOOT-JETS TO FLY ME FREE OF IT!
*IN IRON MAN #68--ROY.


THEN, WITH MY MACROBOTS POWERED BY THE RAW ENERGY EACH OF YOU POSSESSES, NOTHING IN THE WORLD WILL BAR THEIR PATHS!
THEY WILL DO WHAT THEY MUST--
--TO BEGIN WORLD WAR III!
THE MAN BE MAD!
YET PERHAPS ONLY I, AS SON OF ODIN, MAY FULLY COMPREHEND THE IMPLICATIONS OF KANG'S TALE OF A CELESTIAL MADONNA AND GODLING SON!
IF HE BE MAD, 'TIS A GREAT MADNESS INDEED!



WELLLL, THIS LOOKS LIKE A PRETTY GOOD PLACE TO TAKE A BREAK-- BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW THE THRILLING, THIRTY-PAGE CONCLUSION TO THIS LITTLE YARN IS WAITING IN THE NOW-ON-SALE

GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #2

MEANWHILE, IN THIS REGULAR BOOK NEXT MONTH: MADONNA!

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68 BIG PAGES
GIANT-SIZE
AVENGERS
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NEW!
KANG THE CONQUEROR!
RAMA-TUT, THE MAD PHARAOH!
PLUS THE SHOCKING SOUL-SEARING
DEATH OF AN AVENGER!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

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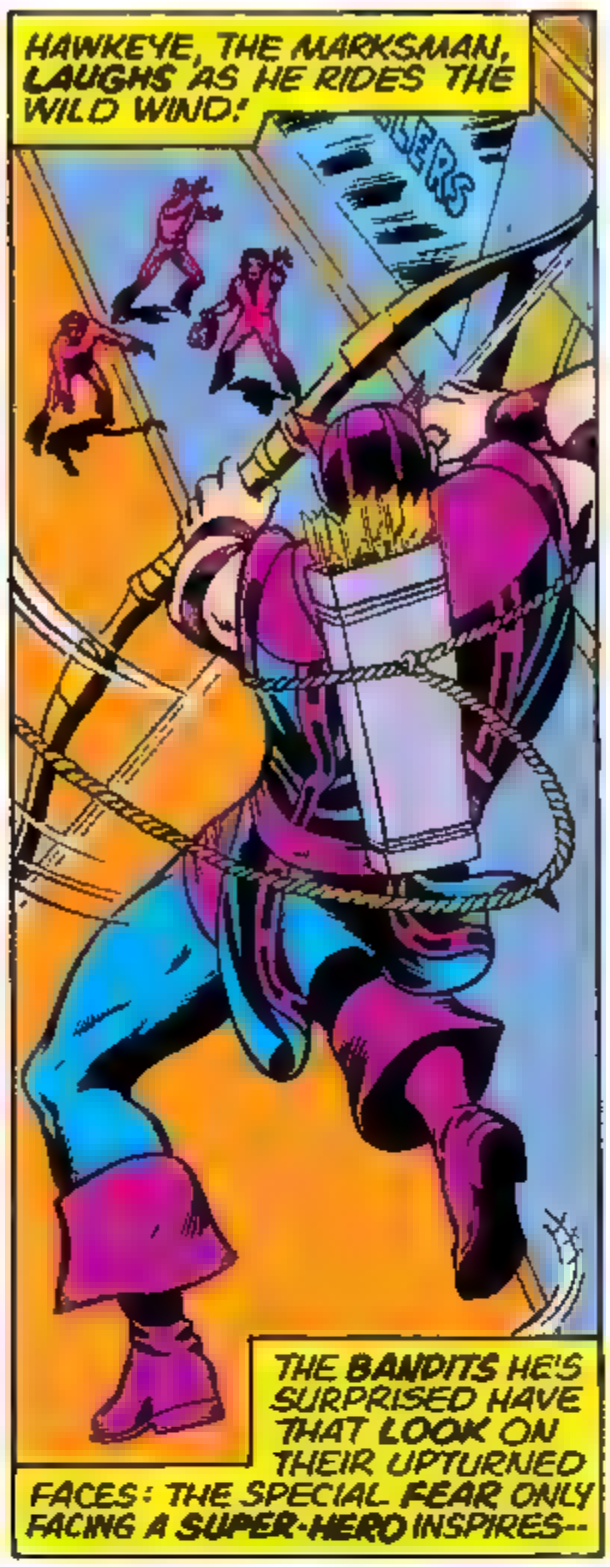
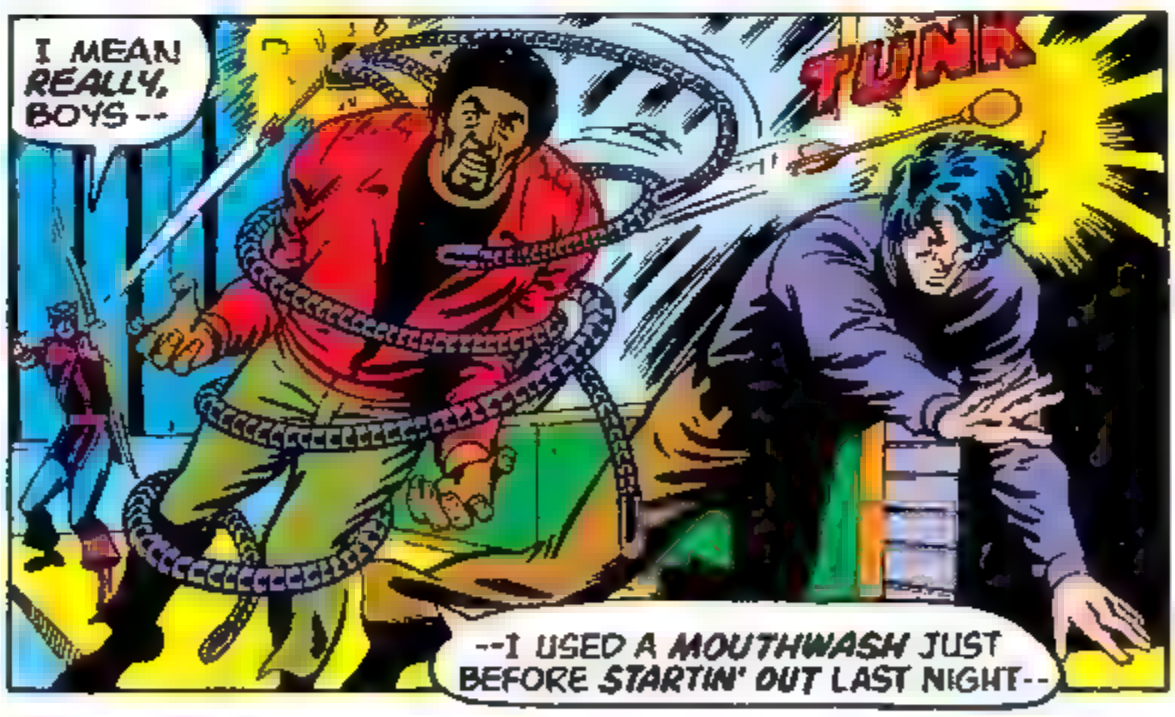

HAWKEYE, THE MARKSMAN, LAUGHS AS HE RIDES THE WILD WIND!
THE BANDITS HE'S SURPRISED HAVE THAT LOOK ON THEIR UPTURNED FACES: THE SPECIAL FEAR ONLY FACING A SUPER-HERO INSPIRES--

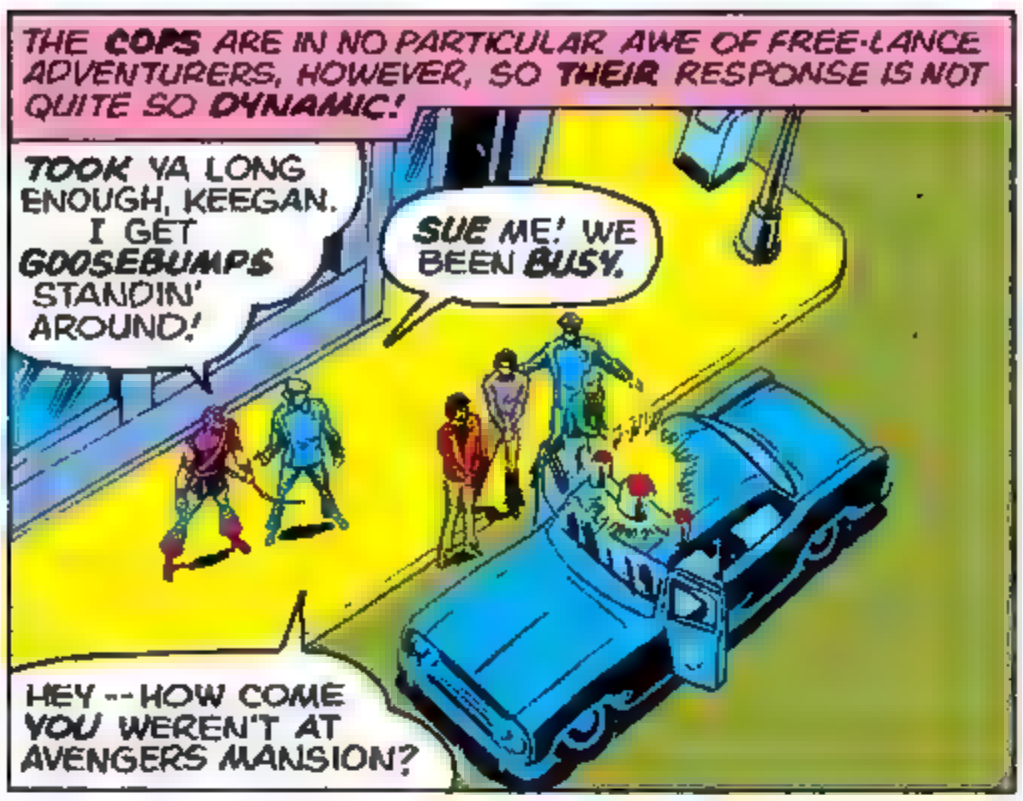
--SO HAWKEYE--THE MARKSMAN--DOES HIS BEST TO DESERVE THE REP!
STEEL BANDS--PINNING ME!
TH-TH-THAT AIN'T NOTHIN', S-SAM!

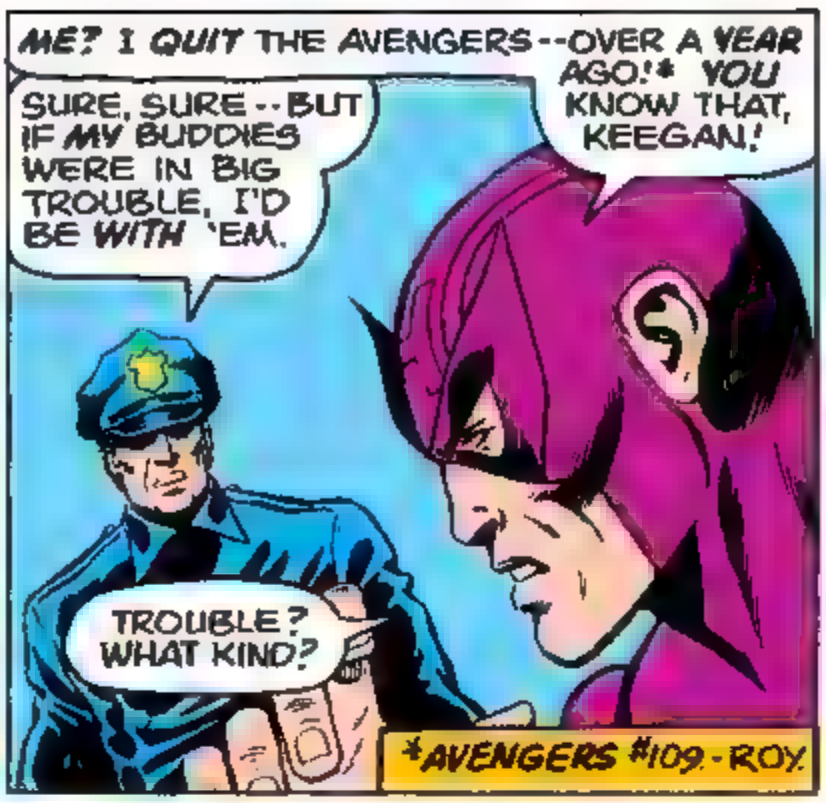
WHADDAYA MEAN "NOTHIN'," PUG-UGLY?
I THINK IT OUGHTTA COP A CUPIE DOLL AT LEAST!

NOW AIN'T THAT JUST LIKE A JEWEL THIEF?
RUNNING OFF WITHOUT EVEN ANSWERING A CIVIL QUESTION!

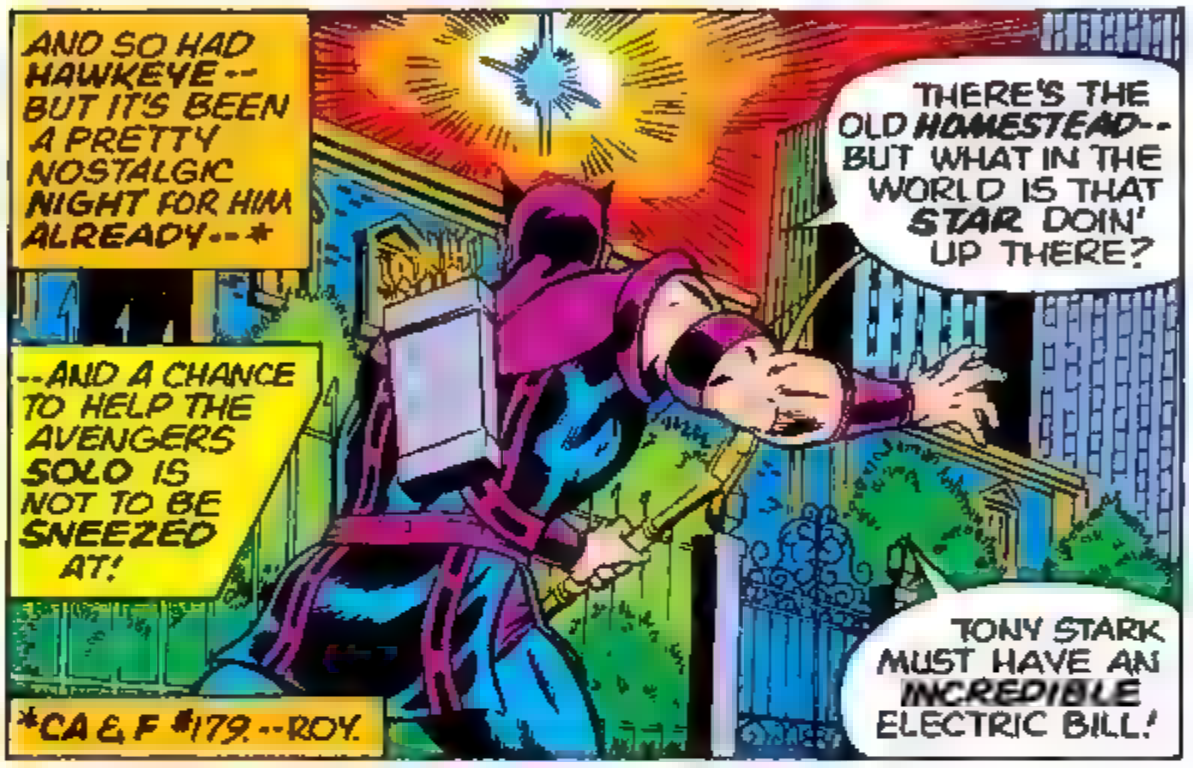

I MEAN REALLY, BOYS--
TUNK
--I USED A MOUTHWASH JUST BEFORE STARTIN' OUT LAST NIGHT--

--SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME OFFENDIN' YOU AT ALL!
HELLO, POLICE--?


THE COPS ARE IN NO PARTICULAR AWE OF FREE-LANCE ADVENTURERS, HOWEVER, SO THEIR RESPONSE IS NOT QUITE SO DYNAMIC!
TOOK YA LONG ENOUGH, KEEGAN. I GET GOOSEBUMPS STANDIN' AROUND!
SUE ME! WE BEEN BUSY.
HEY -- HOW COME YOU WEREN'T AT AVENGERS MANSION?


ME? I QUIT THE AVENGERS--OVER A YEAR AGO!* YOU KNOW THAT, KEEGAN!
SURE, SURE -- BUT IF MY BUDDIES WERE IN BIG TROUBLE, I'D BE WITH 'EM.
TROUBLE? WHAT KIND?
*AVENGERS #109.-ROY.

THE WORST! KANG THE CONQUEROR KIDNAPPED 'EM JUST BEFORE DAWN AND CLAIMED HE WAS GEARIN' UP FOR WORLD WAR III!
HEY! I THOUGHT YOU'D QUIT!


AND SO HAD HAWKEYE -- BUT IT'S BEEN A PRETTY NOSTALGIC NIGHT FOR HIM ALREADY--*
THERE'S THE OLD HOMESTEAD-- BUT WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THAT STAR DOIN' UP THERE?
--AND A CHANCE TO HELP THE AVENGERS SOLO IS NOT TO BE SNEEZED AT!
TONY STARK MUST HAVE AN INCREDIBLE ELECTRIC BILL!
*CA & F #179.--ROY.

HIS PURPOSEFUL ACTIONS BELYING HIS FLIPPANT TONE, HAWKEYE WARILY ENTERS.
AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T CHANGE THE LOCKS.
YOO HOO! YOUR PRODIGAL SON'S COME TO CALL!

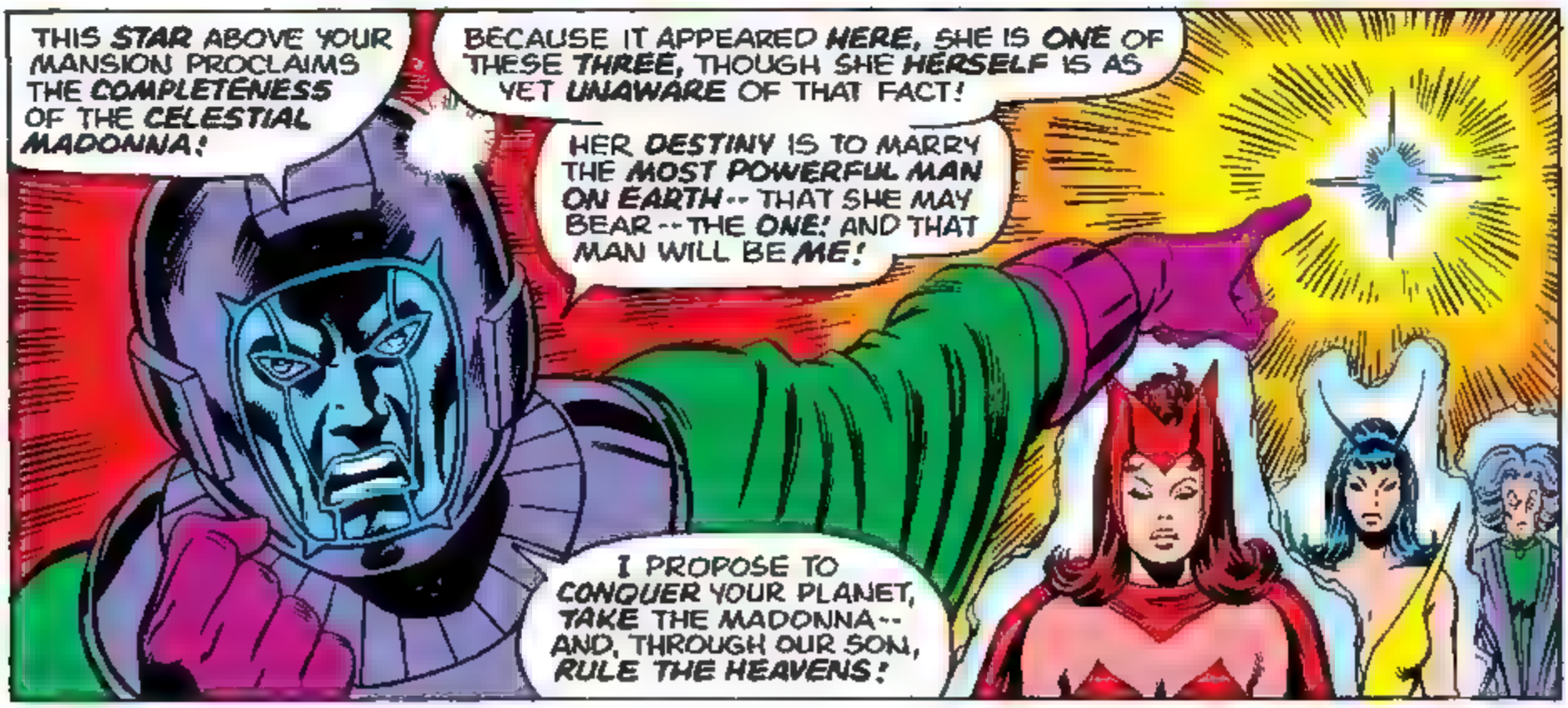
BUT THE MASSIVE MANSION IS AS SILENT AS THE NOON-DAY SUN OUTSIDE.
SOME SUPER-HERO I AM!
WHY DIDN'T I WAIT AND ASK KEEGAN SOME QUESTIONS?

WHY? BECAUSE I'M SO STUCK ON PLAYIN' A LONE HAND, I'M ALWAYS RUNNIN' OFF HALF-COCKED!
NATURALLY, THERE'S NOBODY HERE! I'D BETTER CALL THE F.F. OR SOMEBODY FOR A QUICK FILL-IN!

SOMETIMES I ACT AS DUMB AS PEOPLE THINK I AM --
HUH?

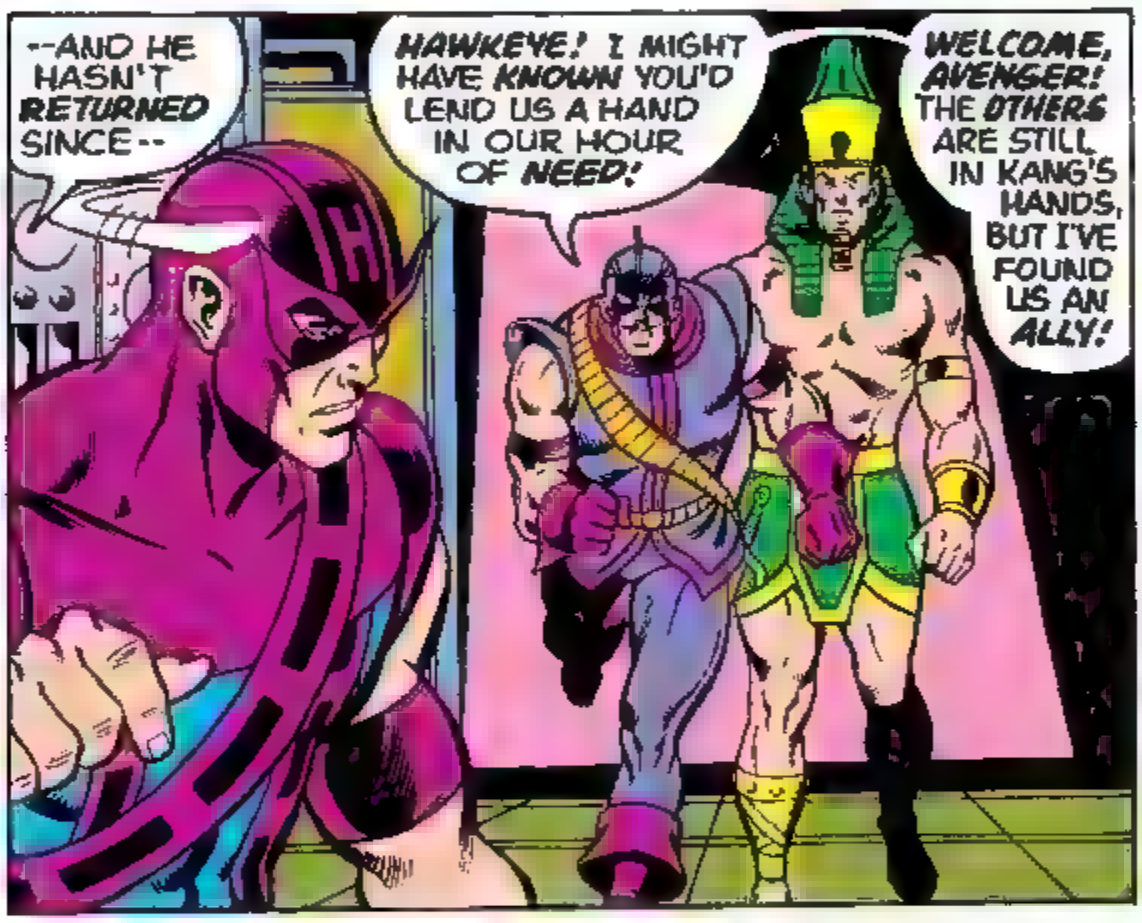
JARVIS! DON'T CREEP AROUND LIKE THAT, WILLYA?
I'M SORRY, MASTER HAWKEYE. I'VE BEEN ILL.*
HAVE YOU COME TO HELP, SIR?
*SINCE KANG PARALYZED HIM IN AVENGERS #129. --ROY.

"IT WAS TERRIBLE, SIR--AND SO SWIFTLY DONE!
"KANG'S MACROBOTS ABSORBED THE AVENGERS' POWER AND TURNED IT BACK ON THEM! THEY FELL IN DEFEAT-- BUT EVEN WORSE WAS THE REASON BEHIND IT!

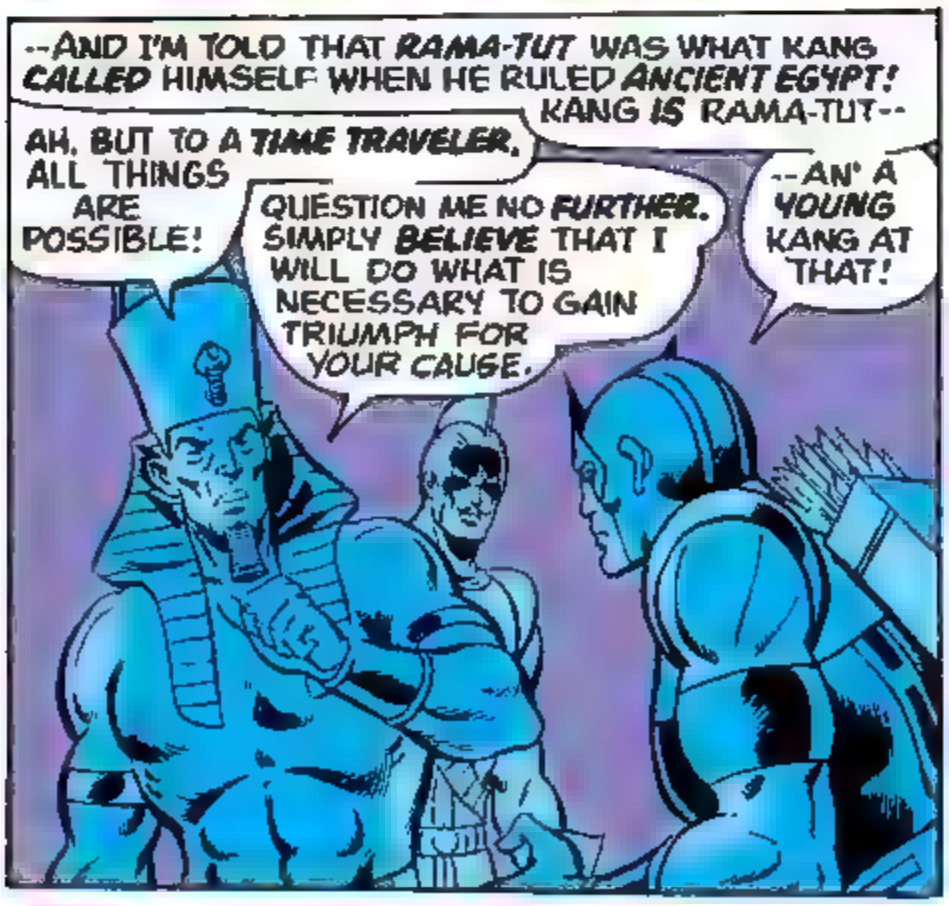

THIS STAR ABOVE YOUR MANSION PROCLAIMS THE COMPLETENESS OF THE CELESTIAL MADONNA!
BECAUSE IT APPEARED HERE, SHE IS ONE OF THESE THREE, THOUGH SHE HERSELF IS AS YET UNAWARE OF THAT FACT!
HER DESTINY IS TO MARRY THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH-- THAT SHE MAY BEAR--THE ONE! AND THAT MAN WILL BE ME!
I PROPOSE TO CONQUER YOUR PLANET, TAKE THE MADONNA-- AND, THROUGH OUR SON, RULE THE HEAVENS!

THEN HE TELEPORTED THEM ALL AWAY-- EXCEPT THE SWORDSMAN. HE LEFT HIM BEHIND-- TOLD HIM HE WASN'T WORTH BOTHERING WITH.
IT--NEARLY BROKE HIM, SIR! THE SWORDSMAN-- HASN'T HAD AN EASY TIME OF IT SINCE HE REJOINED THE AVENGERS! IT'S NOT A BUTLER'S PLACE TO PRY... BUT ONE NOTICES THINGS...

WHAT THINGS? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM, JARVIS?
MS. MANTIS LEFT HIM... AND HIS ACTIONS ALWAYS SEEM TO GO WRONG, SOMEHOW!
HE'S DISTRAUGHT, SIR-- SEEMS TO BE IN A FOG ALL THE TIME--

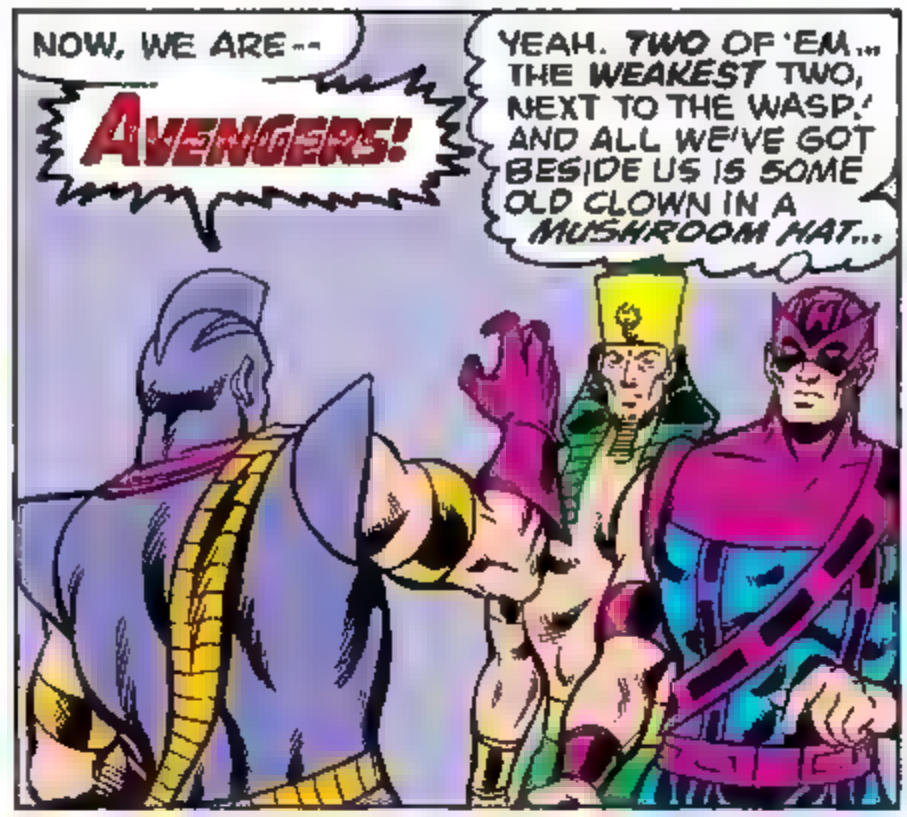

--AND HE HASN'T RETURNED SINCE--
HAWKEYE! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN YOU'D LEND US A HAND IN OUR HOUR OF NEED!
WELCOME, AVENGER! THE OTHERS ARE STILL IN KANG'S HANDS, BUT I'VE FOUND US AN ALLY!

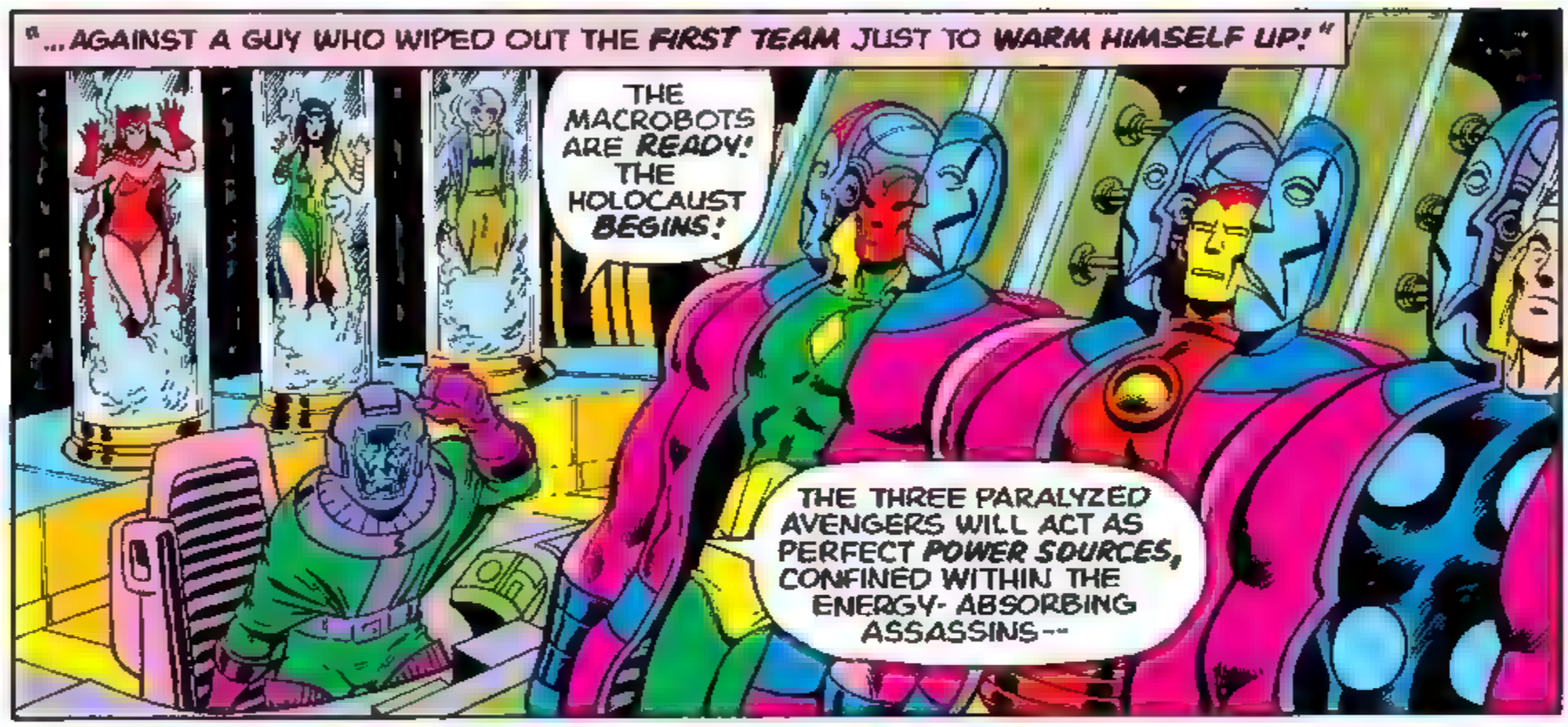
I AM RAMA-TUT! NO MORE MAY I SAY-- BUT I SHALL PROVIDE YOU THE MEANS TO DEFEAT KANG THE CONQUEROR!
WAITAMINNIT! YOU MAY NOT HAVE HEARD OF THIS GUY, SWORD-- BUT I HAVE--


--AND I'M TOLD THAT RAMA-TUT WAS WHAT KANG CALLED HIMSELF WHEN HE RULED ANCIENT EGYPT! KANG IS RAMA-TUT--
AH, BUT TO A TIME TRAVELER, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!
QUESTION ME NO FURTHER. SIMPLY BELIEVE THAT I WILL DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO GAIN TRIUMPH FOR YOUR CAUSE.
--AN' A YOUNG KANG AT THAT!

OH, SURE--AND MAYBE THIS IS SOME TRICK OF KANG'S! I KNOW THE F.F. SAID HE WAS A MUCH YOUNGER GUY!
BUT I PROBABLY SHOULD GO ALONG FOR NOW. SWORD SOUNDS REALLY OUT OF IT-- IN A DREAM WORLD.
HE'S NOT A BOSOM BUDDY, BUT I DON'T WANT TO BE THE ONE TO KICK HIM OFF THE DEEP END!
OKAY, RAMA LAMA DING DONG-- YOU'RE ON!

WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DOIN' GOOD WORK, SWORD!
WE HAVEN'T ALWAYS SEEN EYE TO EYE, BUT WE MADE A PRETTY GOOD TEAM BACK WHEN YOU TAUGHT ME ARCHERY-- AND WE WILL AGAIN!
BUT THAT WAS WHEN WE WERE CARNIVAL HANDS--

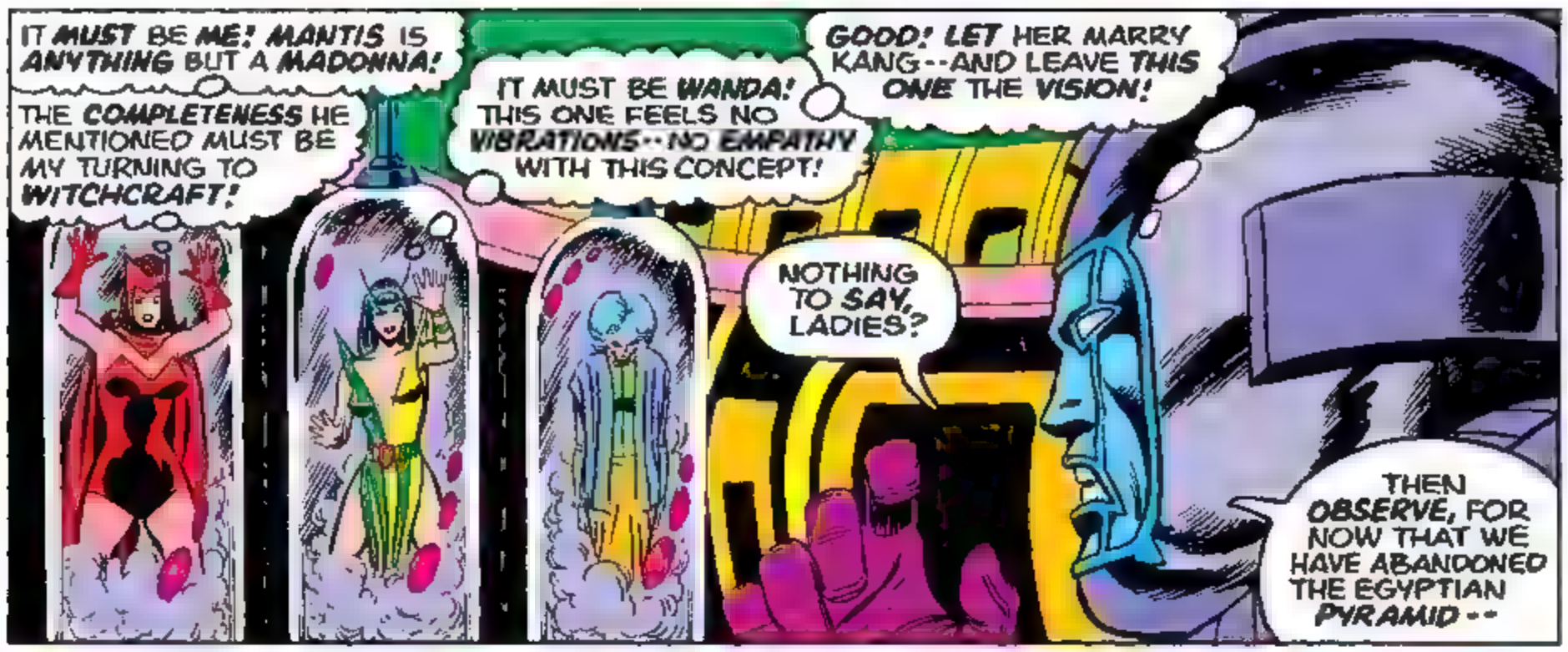

NOW, WE ARE--
AVENGERS!
YEAH. TWO OF 'EM... THE WEAKEST TWO, NEXT TO THE WASP.' AND ALL WE'VE GOT BESIDE US IS SOME OLD CLOWN IN A MUSHROOM HAT...

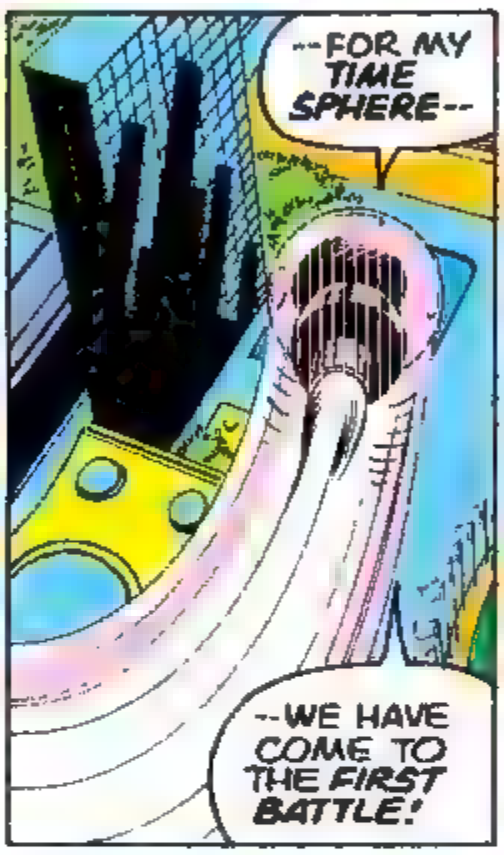

"...AGAINST A GUY WHO WIPED OUT THE FIRST TEAM JUST TO WARM HIMSELF UP!"
THE MACROBOTS ARE READY! THE HOLOCAUST BEGINS!
THE THREE PARALYZED AVENGERS WILL ACT AS PERFECT POWER SOURCES, CONFINED WITHIN THE ENERGY- ABSORBING ASSASSINS--

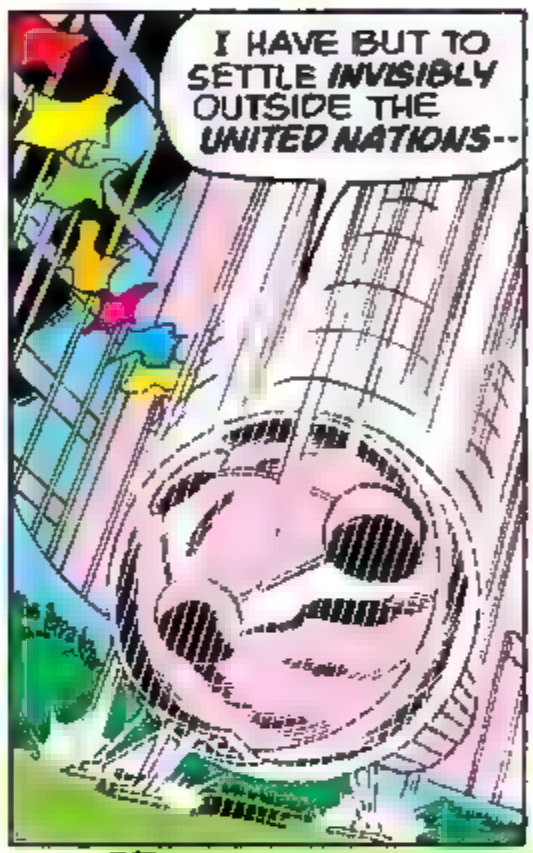
--AND EVEN THE WEAKEST OF THE THREE WILL PROVE STRONGER THAN ANY OPPOSITION EARTH MAY MOUNT, EH, VISION?
THERE WILL BE LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN YOUR MACROBOT'S MURDERING THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE!

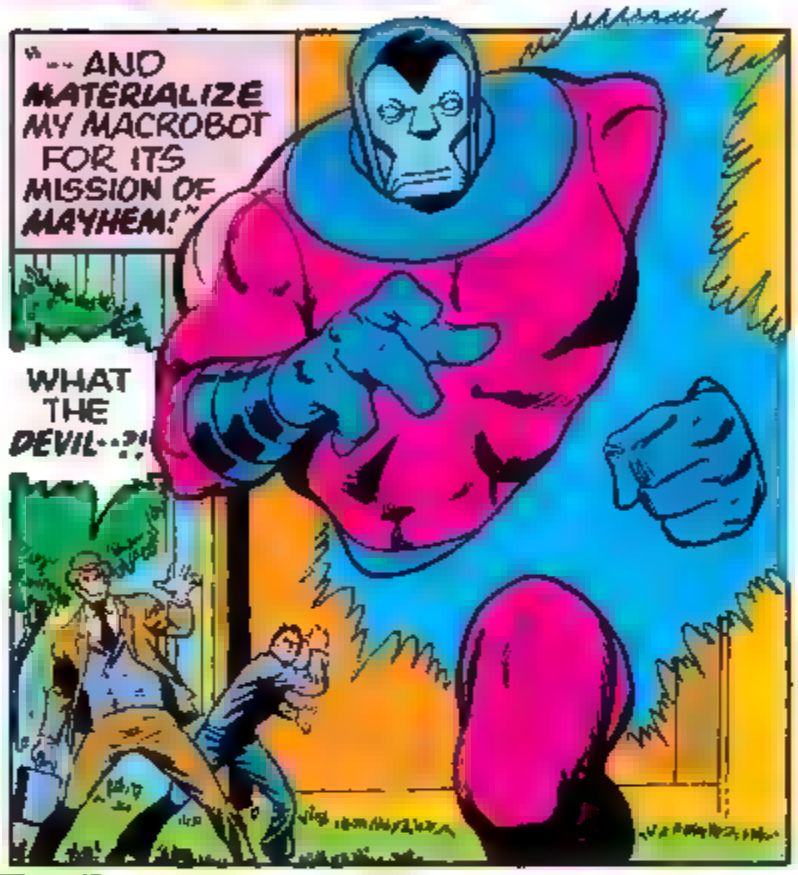
THEN, THE LEADERS OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC WILL FALL--
--AND IN THE RESULTING CHAOS, ONE WELL-PLACED NEUTRON BOMB WILL SPARK A WORLD-WIDE CONFLAGRATION!

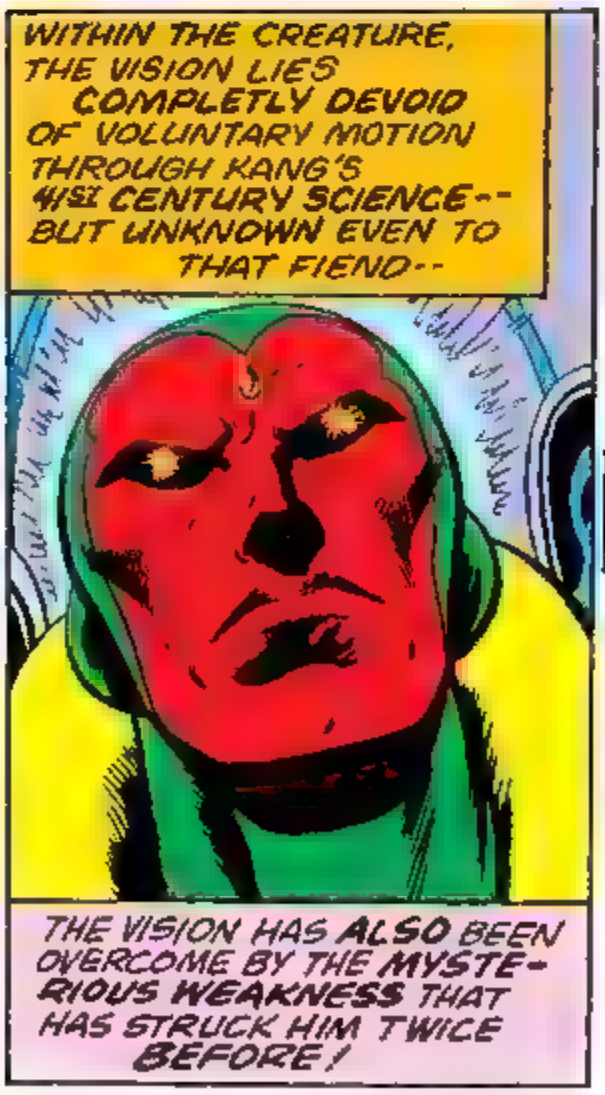
THEN KANG WILL RULE WHAT REMAINS... AND WHEN ONE OF YOU LADIES COMES TO KNOW HER DESTINY, AS MY FRAGMENTARY RECORDS REVEAL WILL OCCUR SOON...
...KANG WILL HAVE YOU, AND THAT WILL BE THAT!

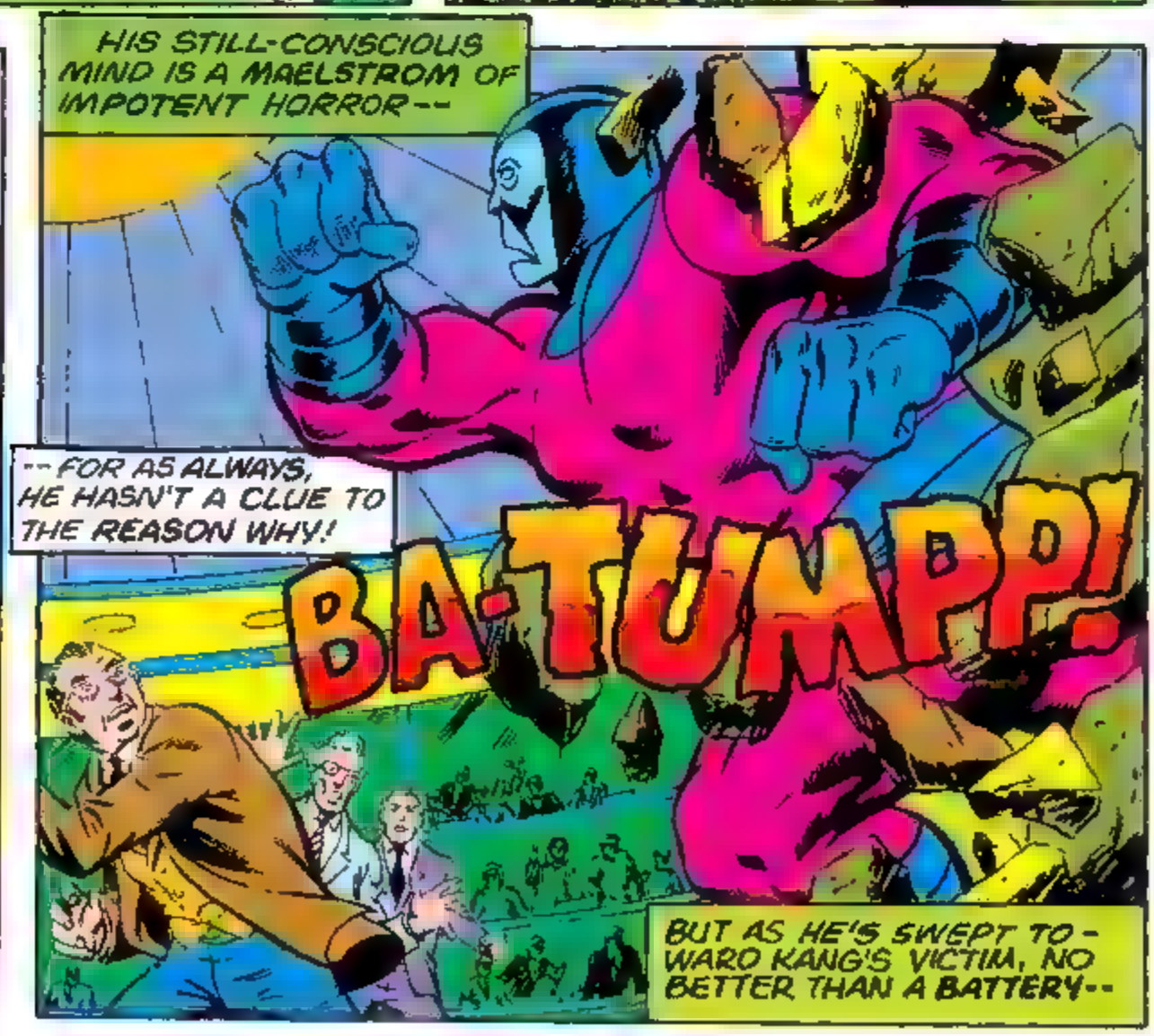

IT MUST BE ME! MANTIS IS ANYTHING BUT A MADONNA!
THE COMPLETENESS HE MENTIONED MUST BE MY TURNING TO WITCHCRAFT!
IT MUST BE WANDA! THIS ONE FEELS NO VIBRATIONS--NO EMPATHY WITH THIS CONCEPT!
GOOD! LET HER MARRY KANG--AND LEAVE THIS ONE THE VISION!
NOTHING TO SAY, LADIES?
THEN OBSERVE, FOR NOW THAT WE HAVE ABANDONED THE EGYPTIAN PYRAMID--

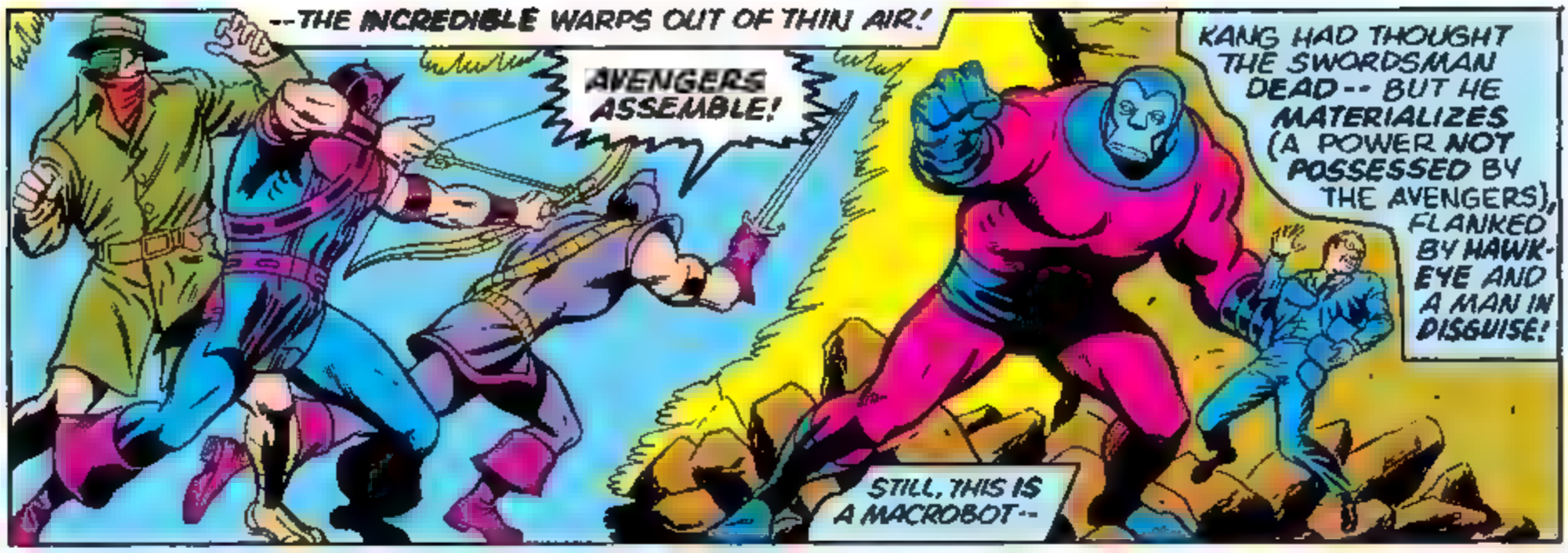

--FOR MY TIME SPHERE--
--WE HAVE COME TO THE FIRST BATTLE!

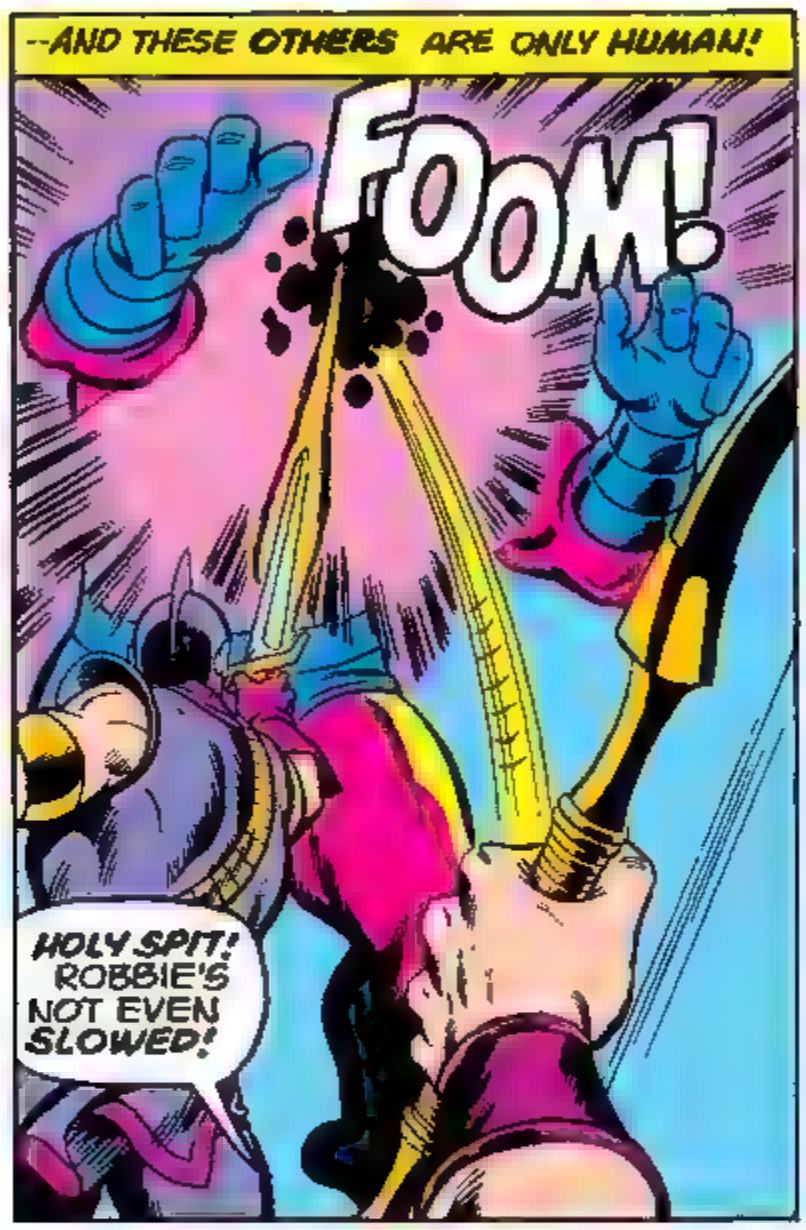

I HAVE BUT TO SETTLE INVISIBLY OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS--

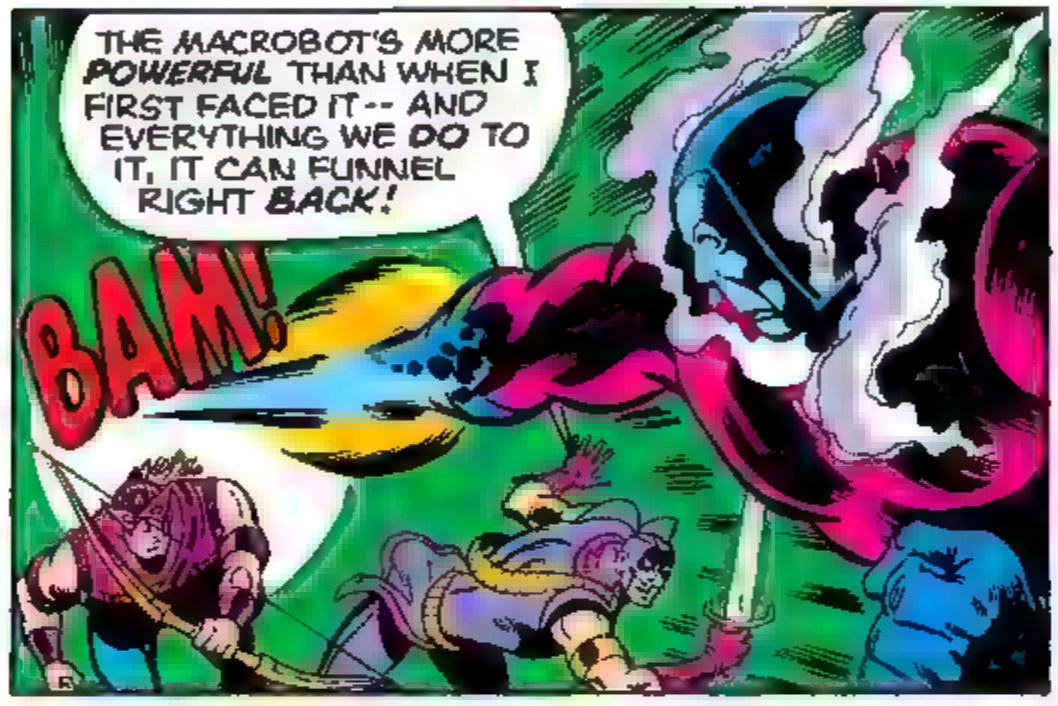

"--AND MATERIALIZE MY MACROBOT FOR ITS MISSION OF MAYHEM!"
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!


WITHIN THE CREATURE, THE VISION LIES COMPLETELY DEVOID OF VOLUNTARY MOTION THROUGH KANG'S 41st CENTURY SCIENCE--BUT UNKNOWN EVEN TO THAT FIEND--
THE VISION HAS ALSO BEEN OVERCOME BY THE MYSTERIOUS WEAKNESS THAT HAS STRUCK HIM TWICE BEFORE!


HIS STILL-CONSCIOUS MIND IS A MAELSTROM OF IMPOTENT HORROR--
--FOR AS ALWAYS, HE HASN'T A CLUE TO THE REASON WHY!
BA-TUMPP!
BUT AS HE'S SWEPT TOWARD KANG'S VICTIM, NO BETTER THAN A BATTERY--

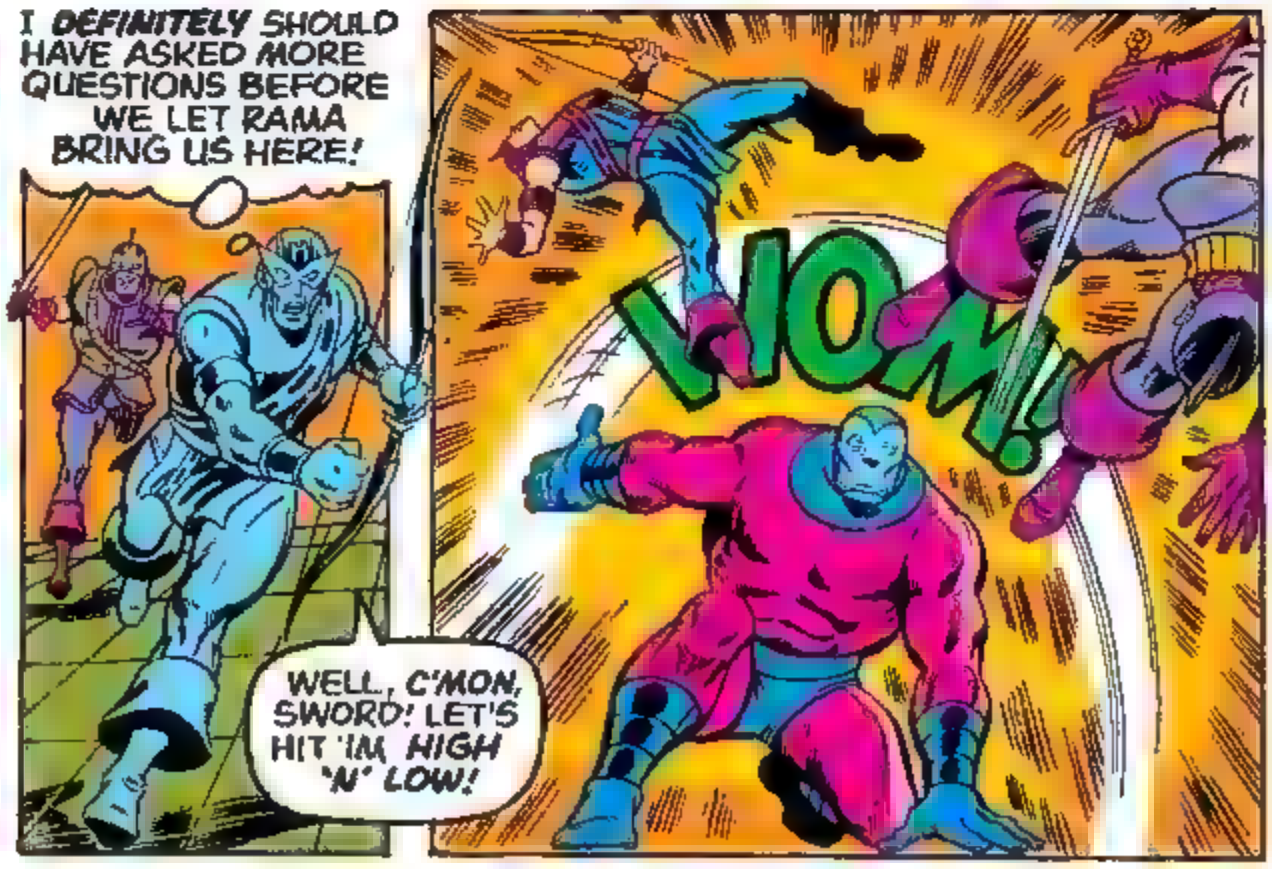

--THE INCREDIBLE WARPS OUT OF THIN AIR!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
KANG HAD THOUGHT THE SWORDSMAN DEAD -- BUT HE MATERIALIZES (A POWER NOT POSSESSED BY THE AVENGERS), FLANKED BY HAWK-EYE AND A MAN IN DISGUISE!
STILL, THIS IS A MACROBOT--

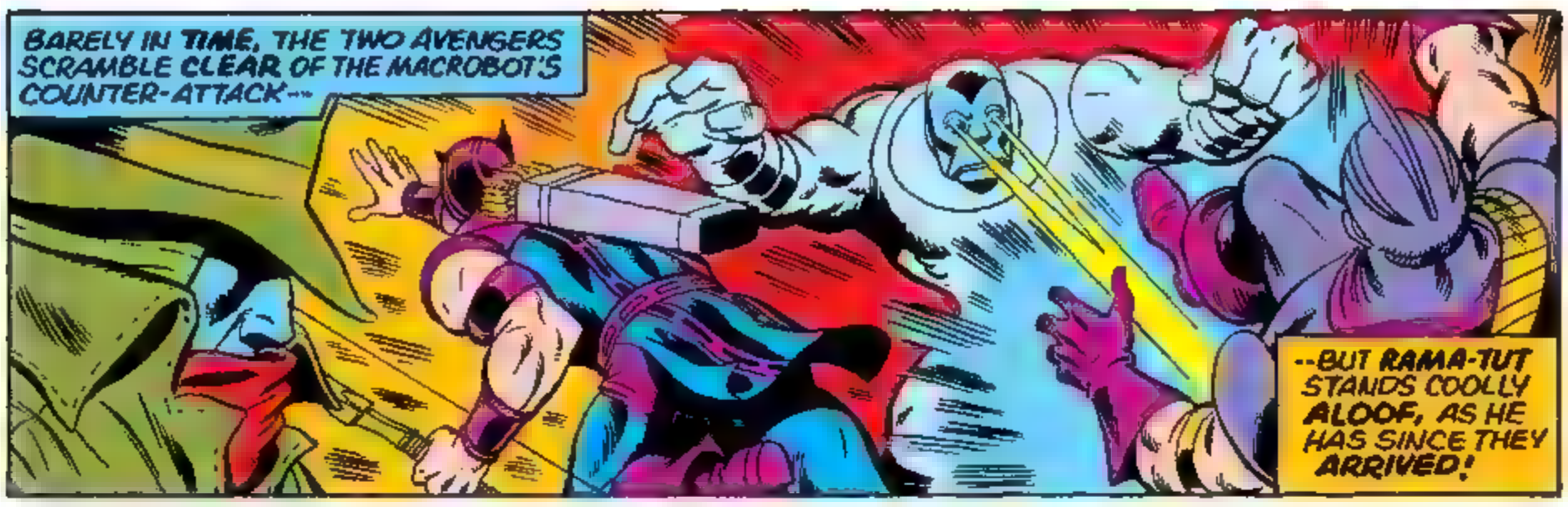

--AND THESE OTHERS ARE ONLY HUMAN!
FOOM!
HOLY SPIT! ROBBIE'S NOT EVEN SLOWED!

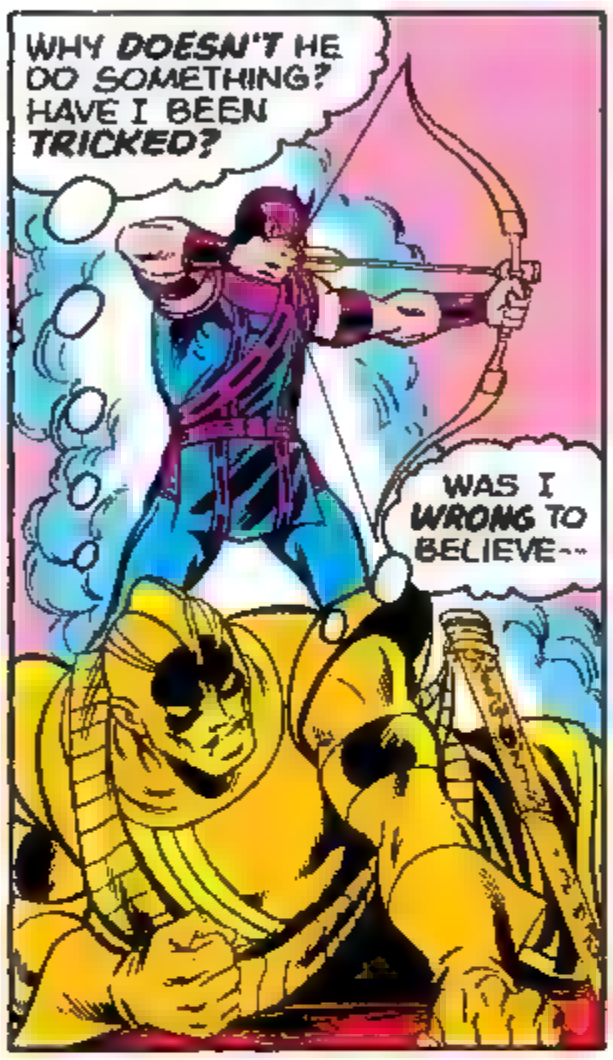

THE MACROBOT'S MORE POWERFUL THAN WHEN I FIRST FACED IT -- AND EVERYTHING WE DO TO IT, IT CAN FUNNEL RIGHT BACK!
BAM!

uh HUH! THEN HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE FIGHT THIS THING?
I HAVEN'T GOT THE FAINTEST IDEA!

JUST KEEP FIGHTING, AND DON'T LET IT KILL YOU! THE PHARAOH WILL COME THROUGH SOON!
uh HUH.
BLAM!


I DEFINITELY SHOULD HAVE ASKED MORE QUESTIONS BEFORE WE LET RAMA BRING US HERE!
WELL, C'MON, SWORD! LET'S HIT 'IM HIGH 'N' LOW!
WOM!

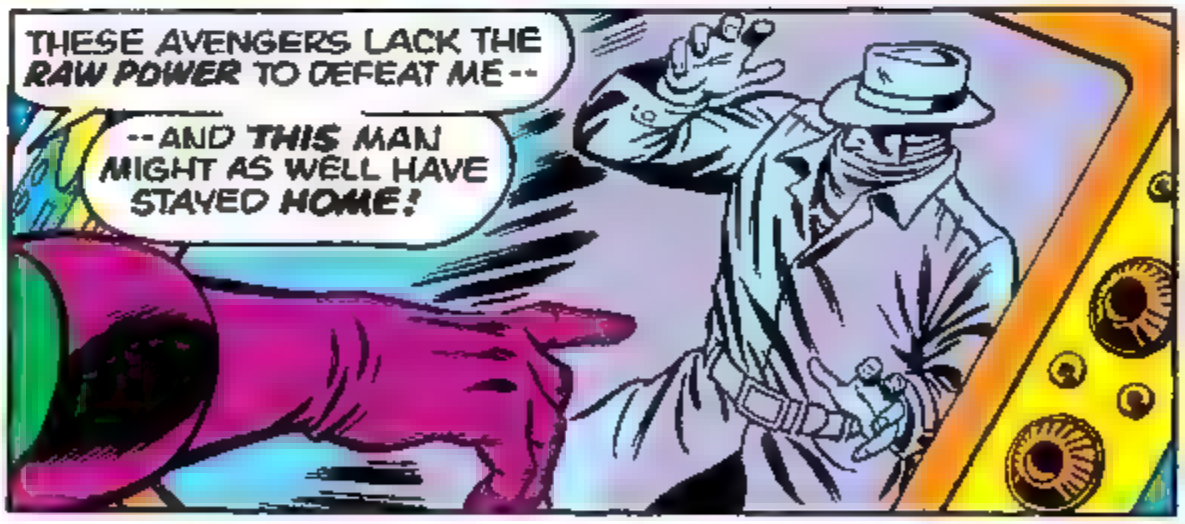

BARELY IN TIME, THE TWO AVENGERS SCRAMBLE CLEAR OF THE MACROBOT'S COUNTER-ATTACK---
--BUT RAMA-TUT STANDS COOLLY ALOOF, AS HE HAS SINCE THEY ARRIVED!

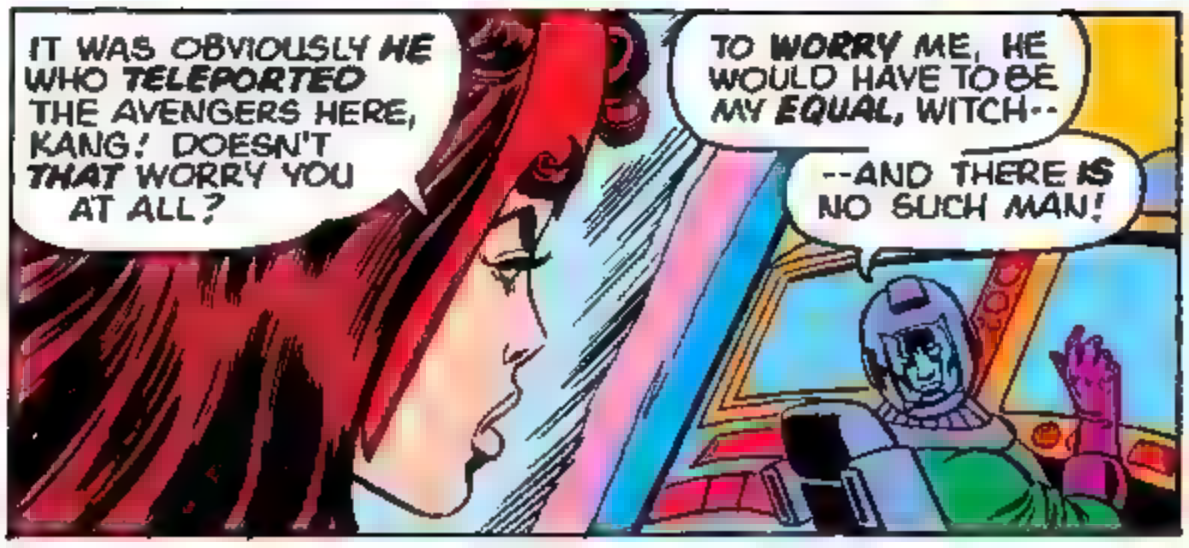

WHY DOESN'T HE DO SOMETHING? HAVE I BEEN TRICKED?
WAS I WRONG TO BELIEVE--

"--WHEN HE CONFRONTED ME IN THE TOMB, FROM OUT OF NOWHERE?
"NO! RAMA-TUT HAS HELPED, BY SHOWING US WHERE KANG WOULD ATTACK!

"HE'S PLAYING SOME DEEPER GAME!"
AND THE SWORDSMAN CLINGS TO THAT BELIEF, FEELING IT STRENGTHEN HIM...

...UNAWARE THAT BOTH HAWKEYE AND KANG THINK OTHERWISE!
THE WAR GOES WELL!


THESE AVENGERS LACK THE RAW POWER TO DEFEAT ME--
--AND THIS MAN MIGHT AS WELL HAVE STAYED HOME!


IT WAS OBVIOUSLY HE WHO TELEPORTED THE AVENGERS HERE, KANG! DOESN'T THAT WORRY YOU AT ALL?
TO WORRY ME, HE WOULD HAVE TO BE MY EQUAL, WITCH--
--AND THERE IS NO SUCH MAN!

BREAK: REFLECTIONS OF THE PHARAOH...

"HOW **POWERFUL** I WAS... HOW **CALCULATING** AND **CRUEL!** BUT ALL THAT POWER NEVER GAINED ME THE **ONE THING** I LEARNED IN LATER LIFE I WANTED **MOST OF ALL...**

"...MY BELOVED **RAVONNA,** WHO LIES AS THOUGH LIFE-LESS IN **SUSPENDED ANIMATION!**

"AS MY **SIXTIETH YEAR** CREPT UPON ME, I REALIZED THE **VOID** I HAD MADE OF MY LIFE. CONQUEST WAS A **DRUG** -- STIMULATING ONLY FOR A **TIME** -- AND IN THE END, I WOKE UP **ALONE.**

"I VOWED TO **RETIRE** FROM THE FIELD.

"SO I **LEFT** THE 41ST CENTURY, WITH ITS ROYAL CITY BUILT ON SAND...

...AND RETURNED TO A **HAPPIER** TIME.

"ONCE MORE IN **ANCIENT EGYPT,** ONCE MORE LIKENED TO A **GOD**--

"--I **SMASHED** MY SPHERE AND RETURNED TO MY PEOPLE AS **PHARAOH RAMA-TUT!**

"THEIR BOISTEROUS JOY AT **BEHOLDING** ME AGAIN, AFTER MY **BANISHMENT** AT THE HANDS OF THOSE THEIR LEGENDS ALREADY NAMED "**THE BLUE DEMONS**"--*

"--WARMED MY HEART AND MY SOUL.

*IT HAPPENED IN EARLY F.F. SAGAS. -- ROY.

"I RULED THEM **WELL,** WITH THE VIRTUE I FORMERLY LOATHED MOST: **COMPASSION.** AT SEVENTY, I FINALLY FELT **FULFILLED...**

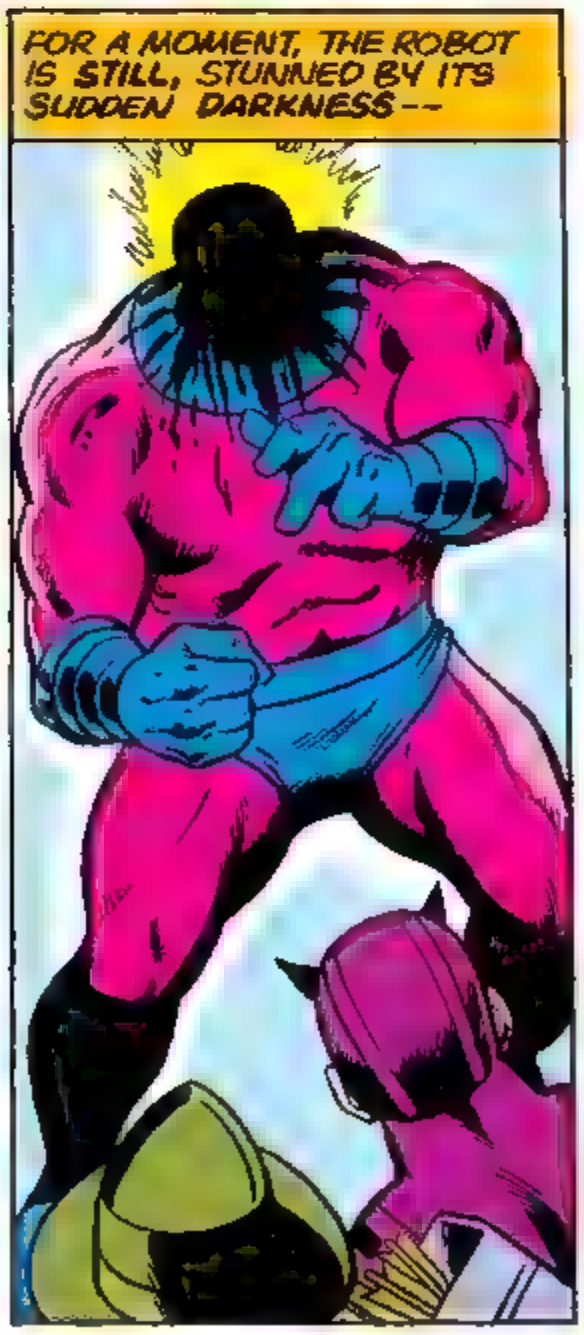
"...UNTIL I BEGAN TO **REMEMBER...!**"

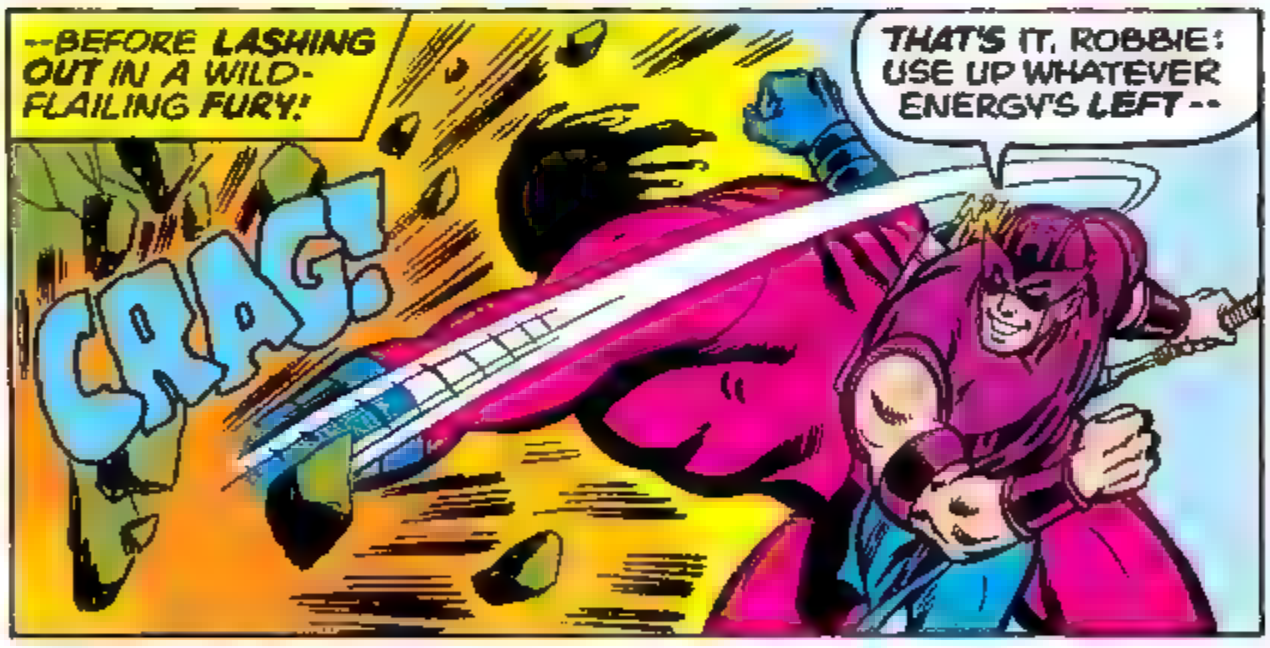
AVENGERS! IT IS TIME--
--TIME FOR YOU TO LEARN!
KNOW THIS, THEN--
--THE ROBOT'S POWER STEMS FROM A VISION WITHIN!

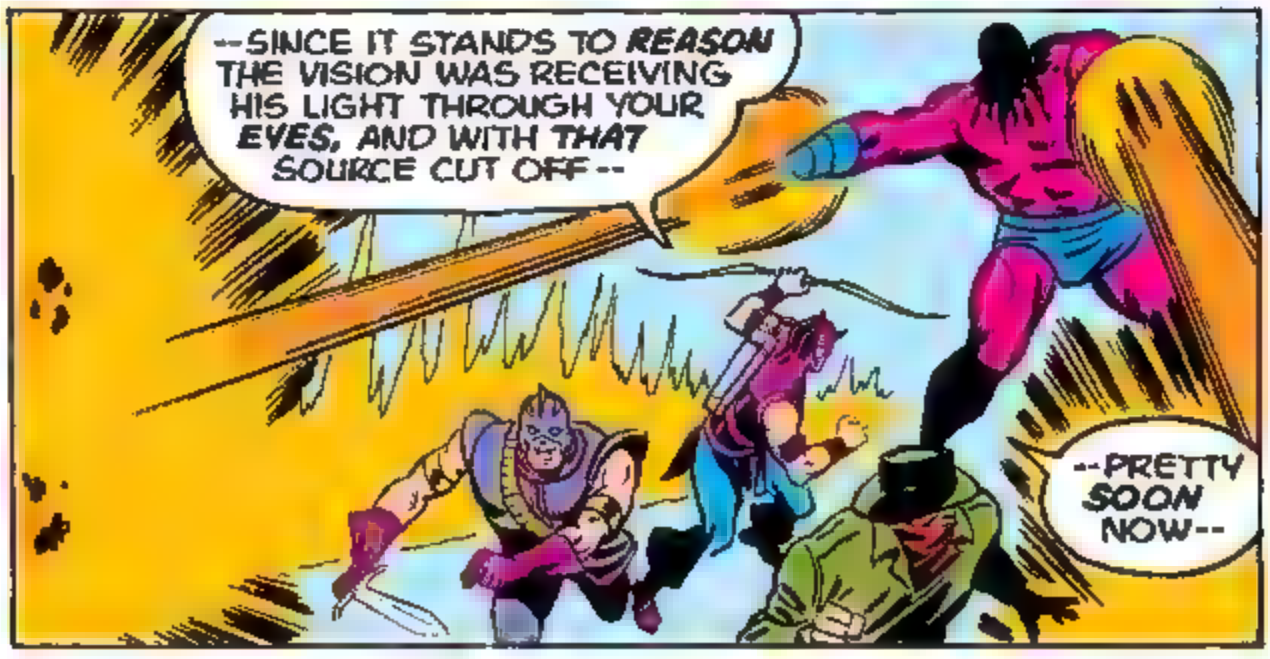
YOU MEAN--THIS BABY ABSORBS ITS POWER FROM THE NUTTY ANDROID'S BODY!
WHY DIDN'T YA SAY SO BEFORE?

I KNOW WHERE THE VISION DRAWS HIS POWER FROM! HE ABSORBS LIGHT THROUGH THE JEWEL ON HIS FOREHEAD--*
*AS LEARNED IN AVENGERS #61.--R.T.

PLOOG!
--AND WITHOUT LIGHT, HE RUNS DOWN!


FOR A MOMENT, THE ROBOT IS STILL, STUNNED BY ITS SUDDEN DARKNESS--


--BEFORE LASHING OUT IN A WILD-FLAILING FURY!
CRAG!
THAT'S IT, ROBBIE: USE UP WHATEVER ENERGY'S LEFT--

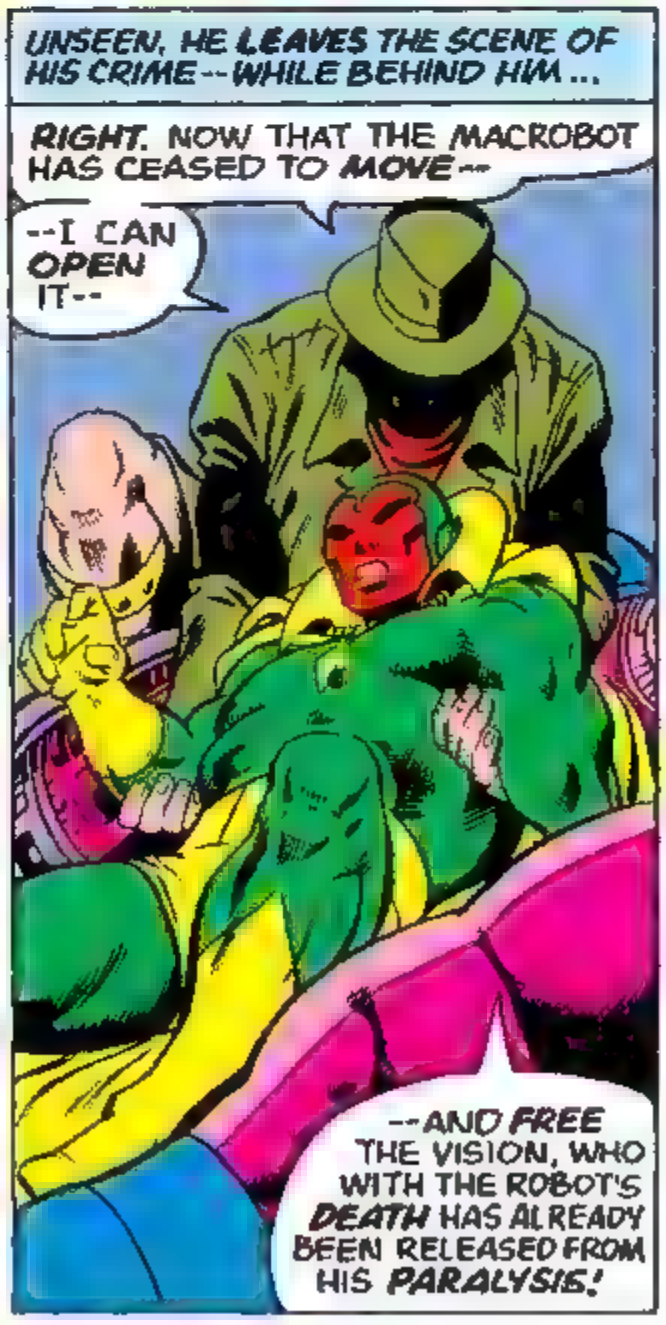

--SINCE IT STANDS TO REASON THE VISION WAS RECEIVING HIS LIGHT THROUGH YOUR EYES, AND WITH THAT SOURCE CUT OFF--
--PRETTY SOON NOW--

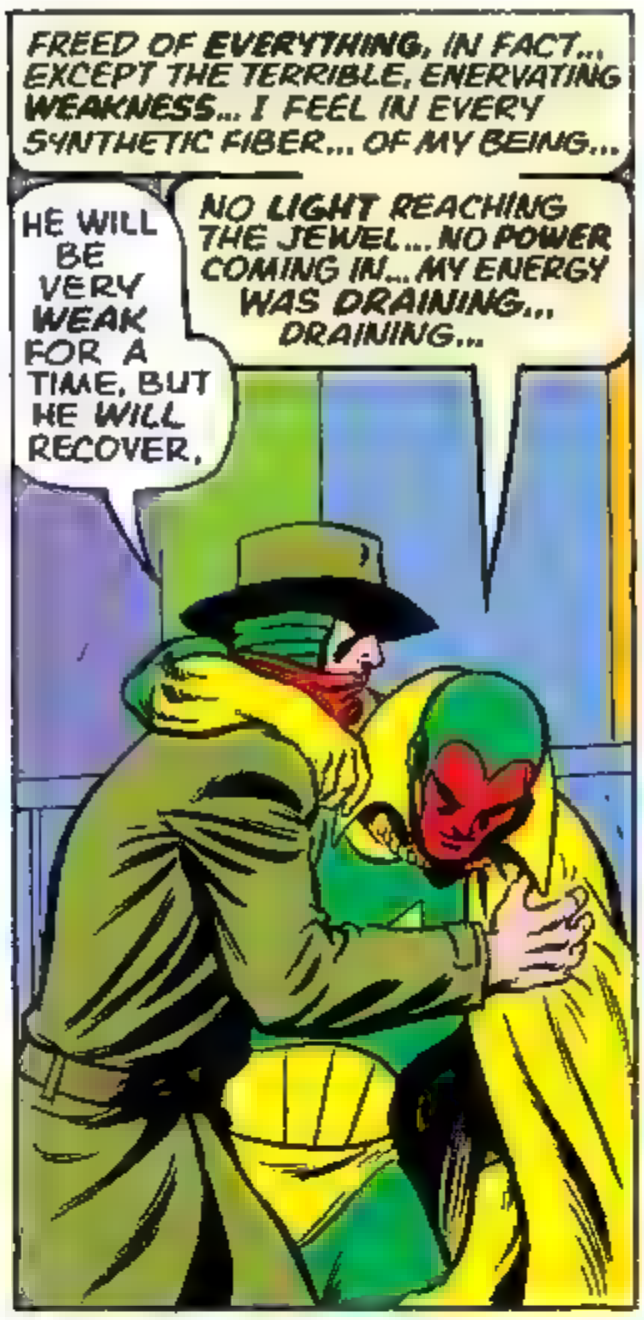
--YOU'LL FALL DOWN AND GO--
BOOM!

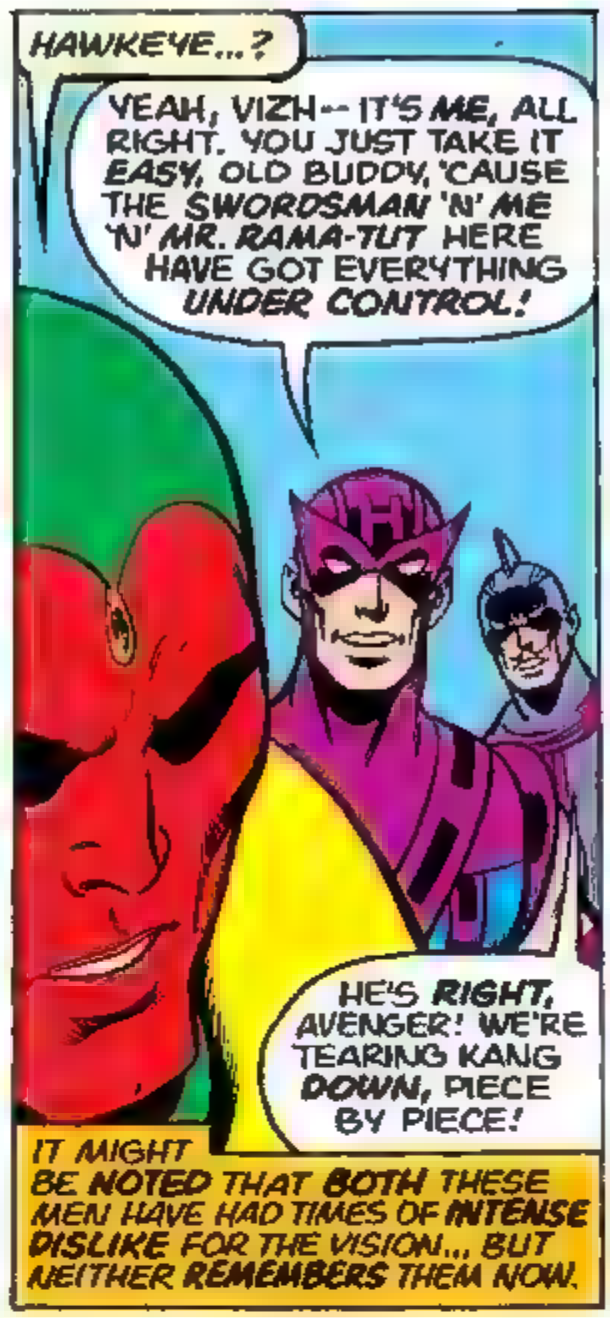
FOR A BREATHLESS MOMENT, THE AVENGING DUO STANDS QUIET, JUST LISTENING TO THE FADING ECHOES OF THAT FALL...
...UNTIL SUDDENLY, A GREAT WAR WHOOP SOUNDS AMONG THEM!
WE DID IT! WE WON! WE BEAT KANG!

THAT WORTHY, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS A VASTLY DIFFERENT REAC-TION--
"[EXPLETIVES DELETED]"

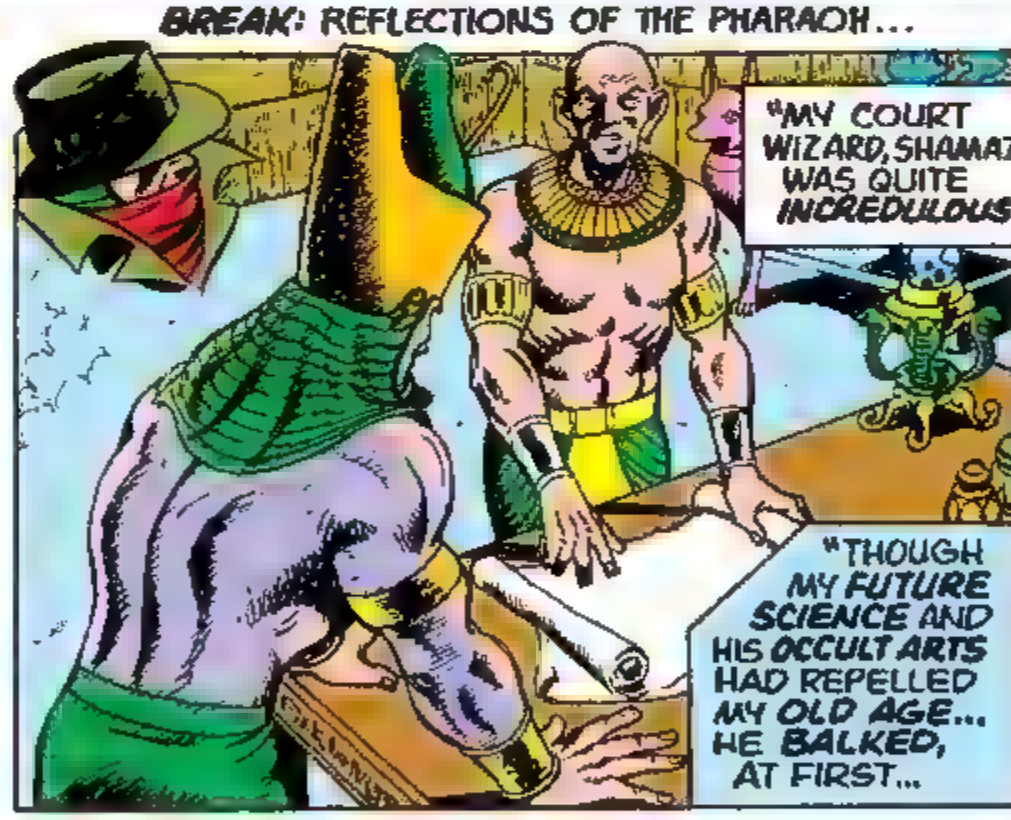
BUT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY BRINGS HIMSELF UP SHORT. NO CAMPAIGN WAS EVER WON IN ANGER, HE TELLS HIMSELF STOICLY!
VERY WELL! I STILL HAVE TWO ROBOTS, POWERED BY IRON MAN AND THOR!
THIS BATTLE IS LOST, BUT ANOTHER AWAITS!

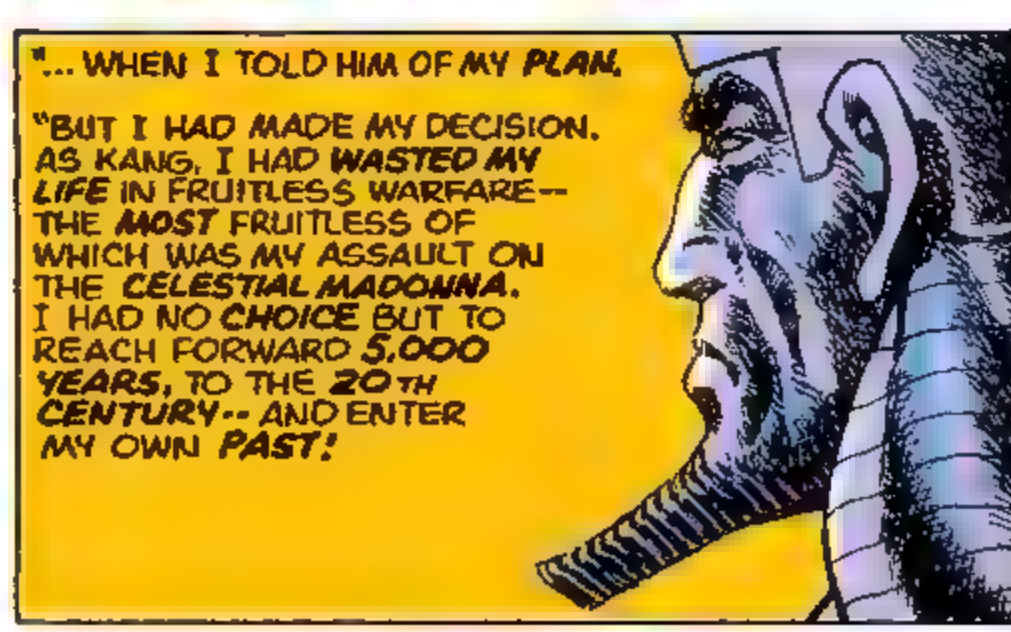

UNSEEN, HE LEAVES THE SCENE OF HIS CRIME--WHILE BEHIND HIM...
RIGHT. NOW THAT THE MACROBOT HAS CEASED TO MOVE--
--I CAN OPEN IT--
--AND FREE THE VISION, WHO WITH THE ROBOT'S DEATH HAS ALREADY BEEN RELEASED FROM HIS PARALYSIS!





BREAK: REFLECTIONS OF THE PHARAOH...





"WITH MY **TIME SPHERE** DESTROYED, I WAS FORCED TO RELY UPON **SUSPENDED ANIMATION.** IT TOOK MY WIZARD AND ME **SEVEN YEARS** TO MAKE MY DREAM A REALITY!

"I WOULD SLEEP AS ONE **DEAD,** PRESERVED INSIDE AN AIR-SEALED **MUMMY CASE,** TO AWAKEN ONLY WHEN **OXYGEN** ONCE MORE TOUCHED MY LIPS.

"**THAT** WOULD OCCUR WHEN THE MUMMY CASE **OPENED,** AND **THAT** WOULD OCCUR WHEN **SUNLIGHT** ONCE MORE FELL ACROSS ITS FACE.

"THEN I '**DIED,**' TO BE ENTOMBED BY A **GRIEVING PEOPLE...** AND A **CAREFUL WIZARD.**

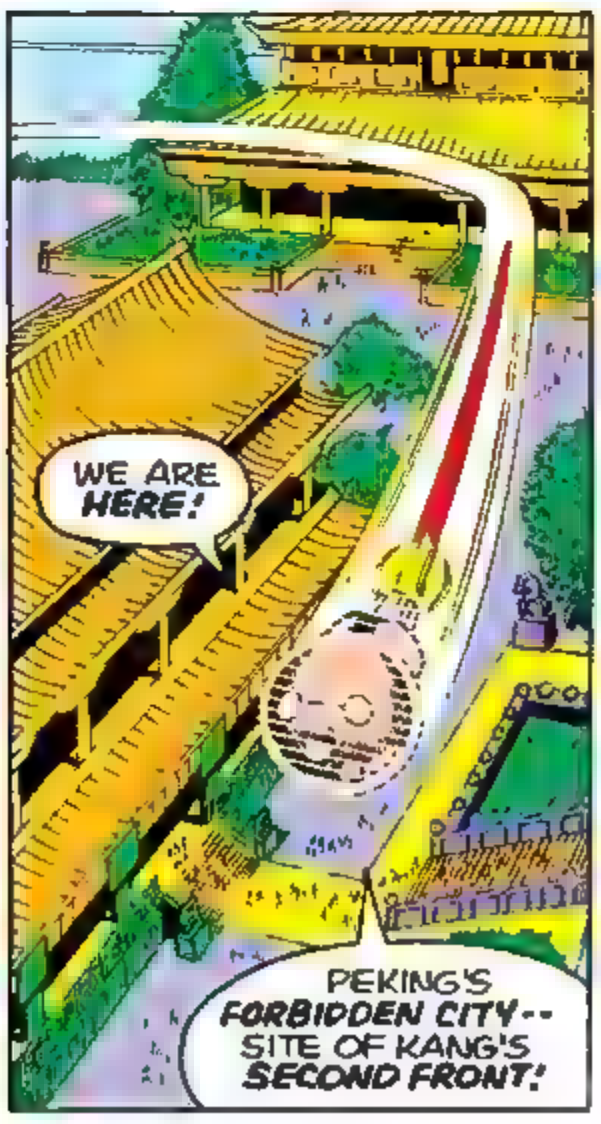
"FOR THE **KEY** TO IT ALL WAS THE **SUNLIGHT...** AND **THERE** MY PREVIOUS TIME TRAVEL SERVED ME **WELL.** I **REMEMBERED,** FROM MY LIFE AS **KANG,** THAT THE SWORDSMAN WOULD ENTER MY PYRAMID --AND THAT THROUGH A SERIES OF **MISHAPS** AND **ACCIDENTS,** HE WOULD STUMBLE INTO THE **HIDDEN CRYPT.**

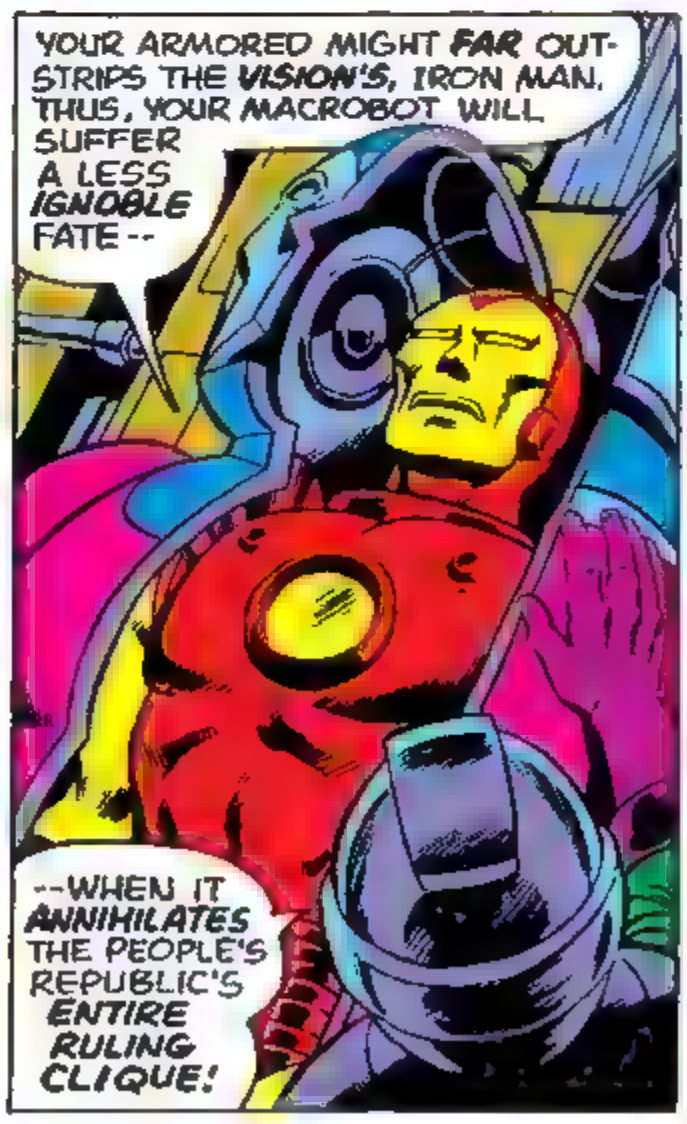
"THUS, I ARRANGED TO HAVE THE CASE **WITHIN** THAT CRYPT-- **ARRANGED** FOR CRYSTAL MIRRORS TO BEAM LIGHT TO ITS **VISAGE**--

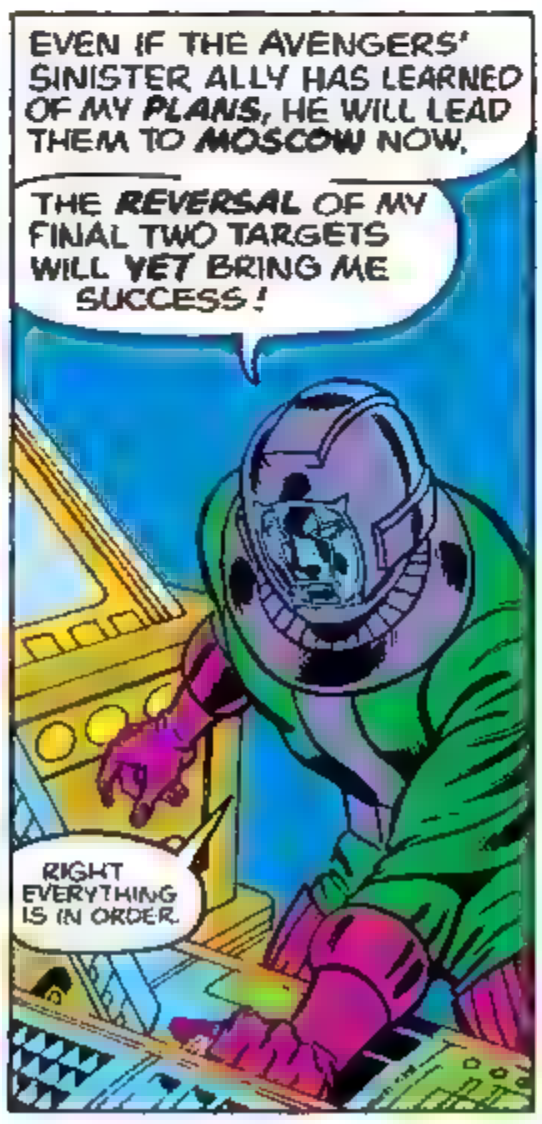
"--AND WHAT WAS **COMPLETE HAPPENSTANCE** TO THE **SWORDSMAN,** FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AFTER I STEPPED INTO THE CASE, WAS A **COMPLETELY RELIABLE** PART OF MY PLAN!

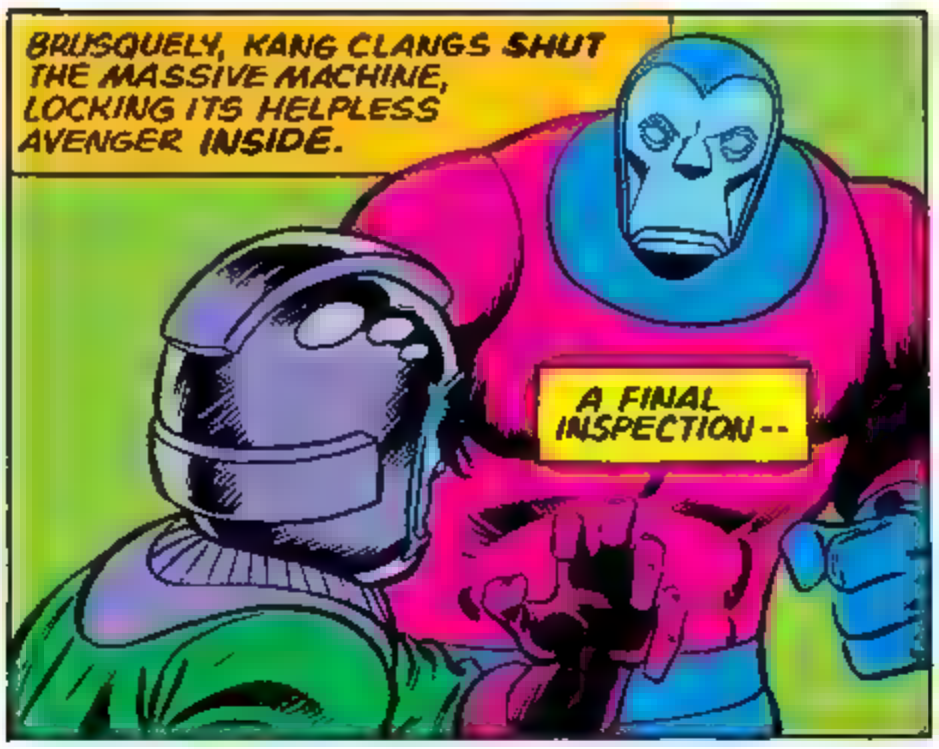
"I HAD ONLY TO **SAVE** KANG FROM THE SWORDSMAN-- FOR **HIS DEATH** IN **MY PAST** WOULD **ALSO** BE MINE--

"--AND NOW I AM HERE, TO **TURN** MYSELF FROM MY **MILITARY MADNESS!**



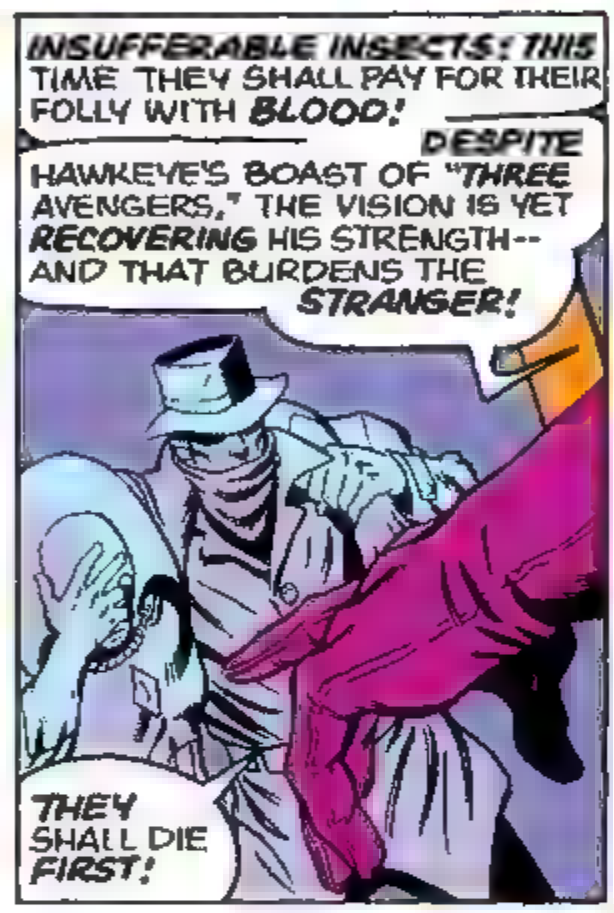





BRUSQUELY, KANG CLANGS SHUT THE MASSIVE MACHINE, LOCKING ITS HELPLESS AVENGER INSIDE.
A FINAL INSPECTION--

--AND THE MOST ASTONISHING SIGHT, SINCE RICHARD NIXON, APPEARS IN PEKING... ALSO LOOKING FOR CHOU EN-LAI!

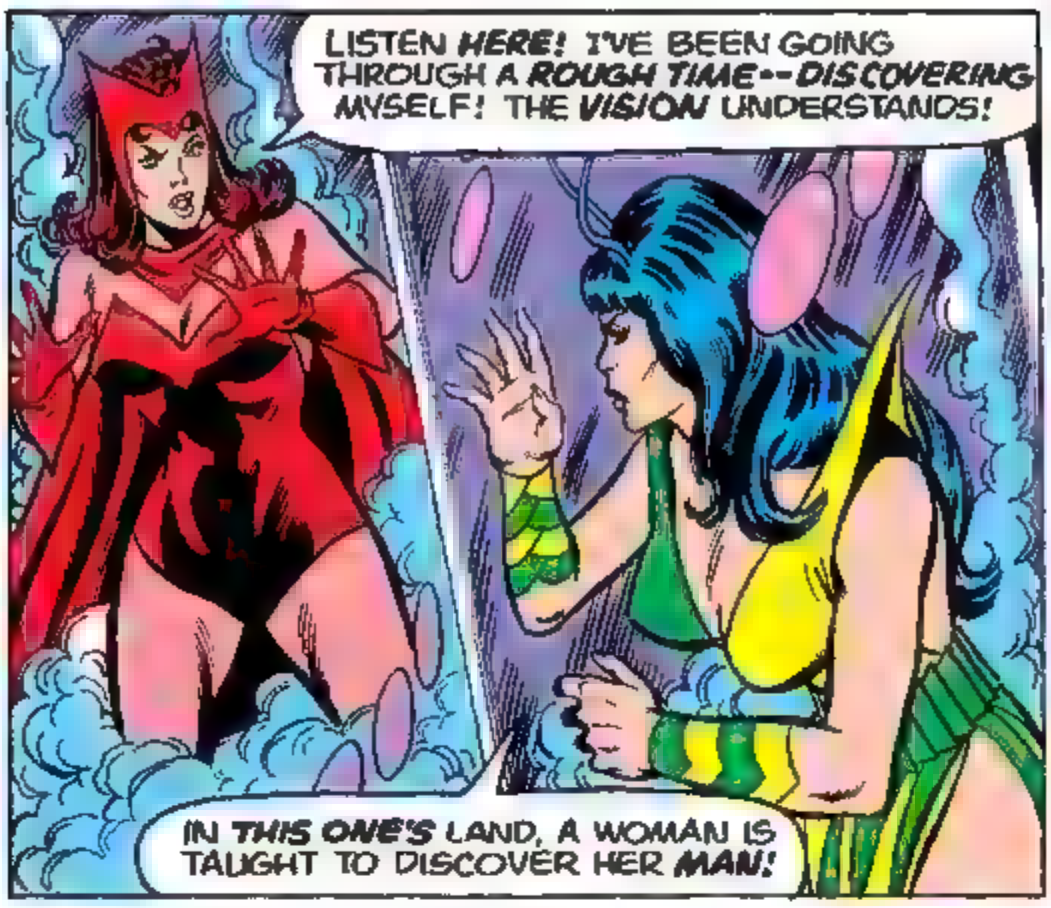
BUT ONE HEART-BEAT LATER--
--AN EVEN MORE ASTONISHING TABLEAU BREAKS THE ROBOT'S RECORD!
HEADS UP, UGLY! NOW YOU'VE GOT THREE AVENGERS ON YOUR CASE!


INSUFFERABLE INSECTS! THIS TIME THEY SHALL PAY FOR THEIR FOLLY WITH BLOOD!
DESPITE HAWKEYE'S BOAST OF "THREE AVENGERS," THE VISION IS YET RECOVERING HIS STRENGTH-- AND THAT BURDENS THE STRANGER!
THEY SHALL DIE FIRST!

YOU RAVE ON AND ON, KANG, BUT YOU DON'T SAY MUCH THAT TURNS OUT TRUE!
BRING HARM TO THIS ONE'S MAN AT YOUR OWN PERIL, RASH ONE!

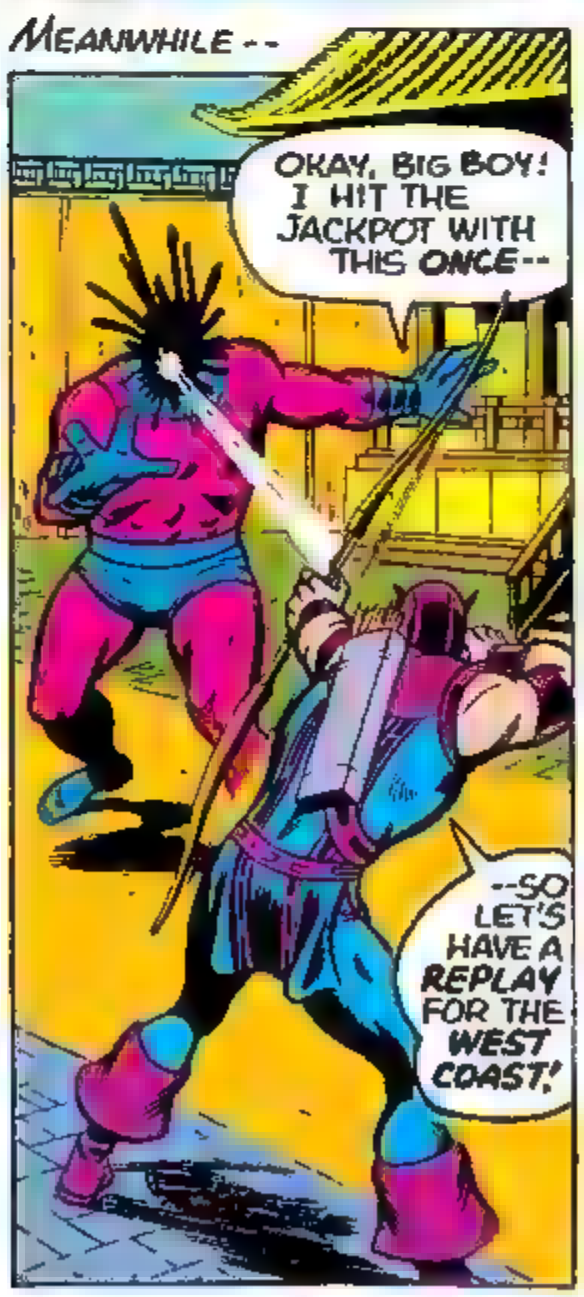
WHA-AT? SINCE WHEN IS THE VISION YOUR MAN, LADY?
NEITHER HE NOR I HEARD A THING ABOUT IT!
HE'S MINE!

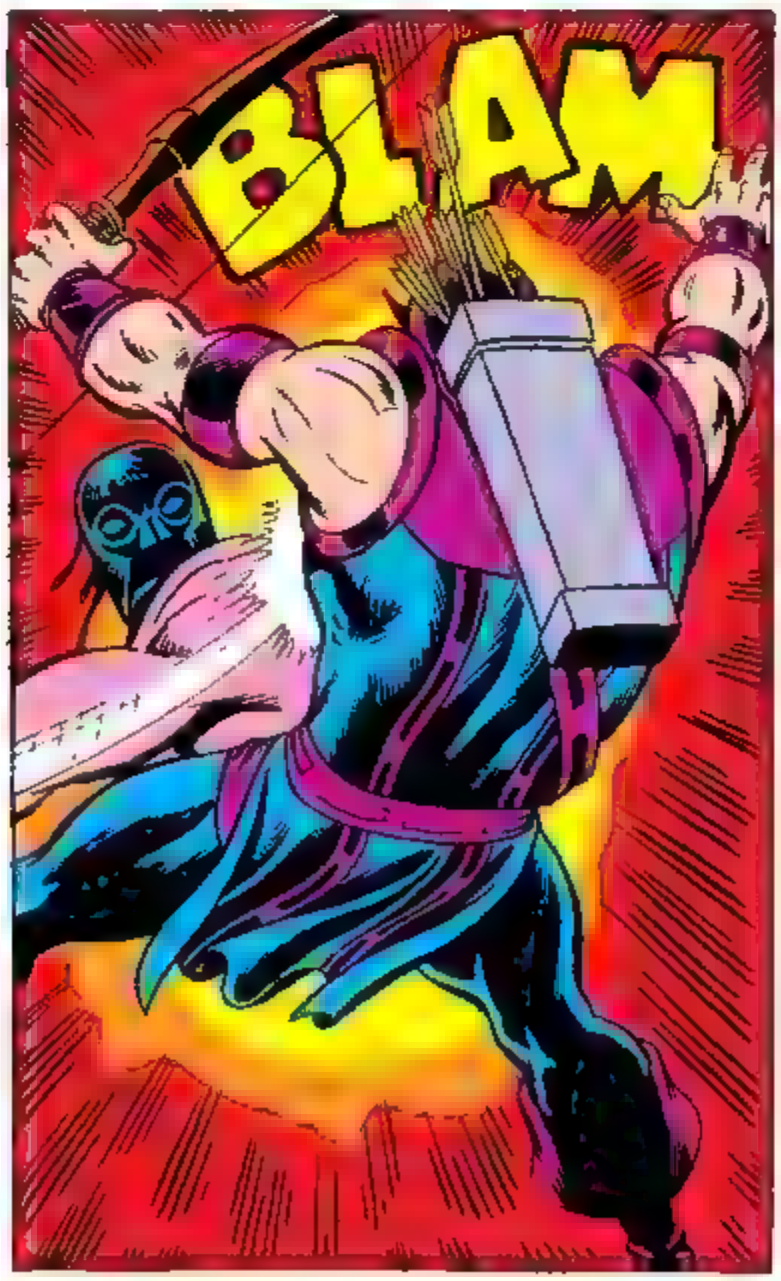
OH, IS HE? MUST HE SUFFER SLAVISHLY, THEN --
--WHILE YOU PLAY YOUR GAMES OF NEGLECT AND ABUSE? IS THAT WHAT YOU EXPECT OF A MAN?

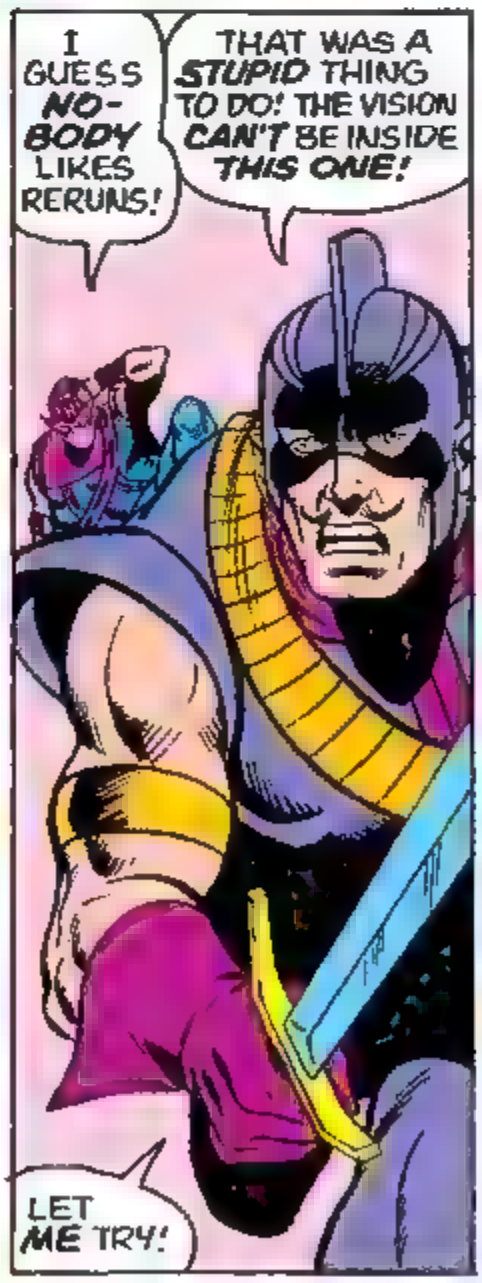

LISTEN HERE! I'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH A ROUGH TIME--DISCOVERING MYSELF! THE VISION UNDERSTANDS!
IN THIS ONE'S LAND, A WOMAN IS TAUGHT TO DISCOVER HER MAN!

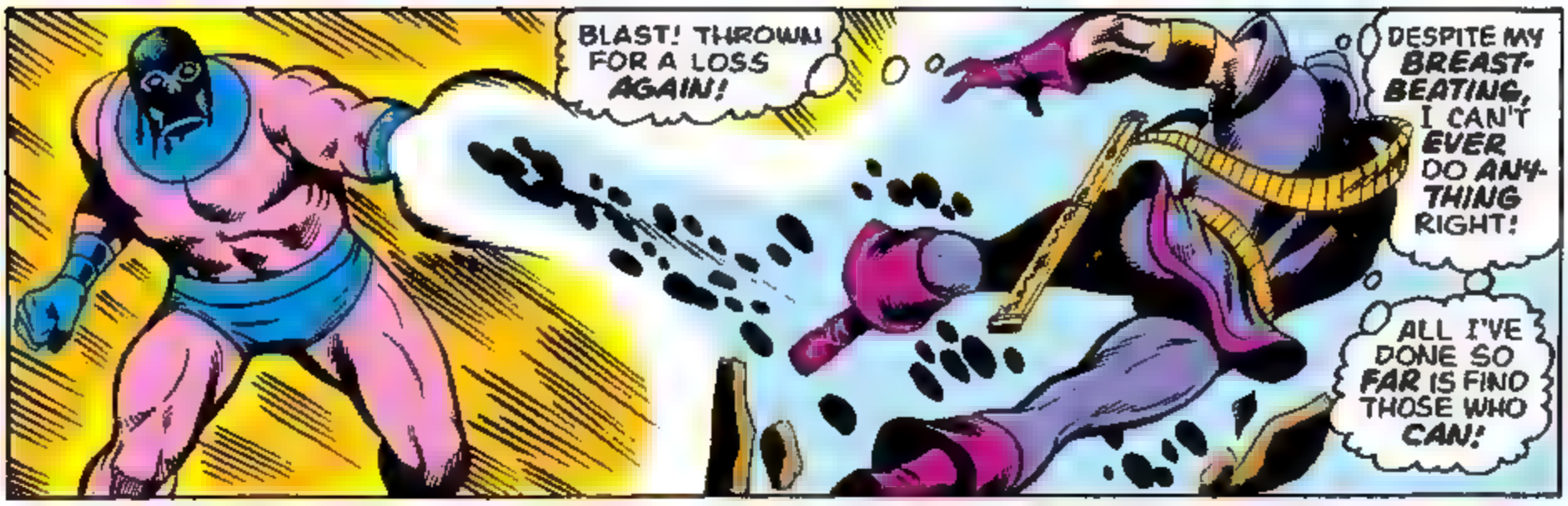
SO WHO ARE YOU --MARCO POLO?
IF YOU HADN'T BEEN SO INTENT ON EXPLORATION, YOUR FIRST MAN WOULDN'T BE IN THE SHAPE HE'S IN!

THE SWORDSMAN IS WEAK! HE WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR ME!
SILENCE!
THE ONLY MAN IN YOUR LIVES NOW IS ME--SO CEASE THIS RAUCOUS PRATTLE!

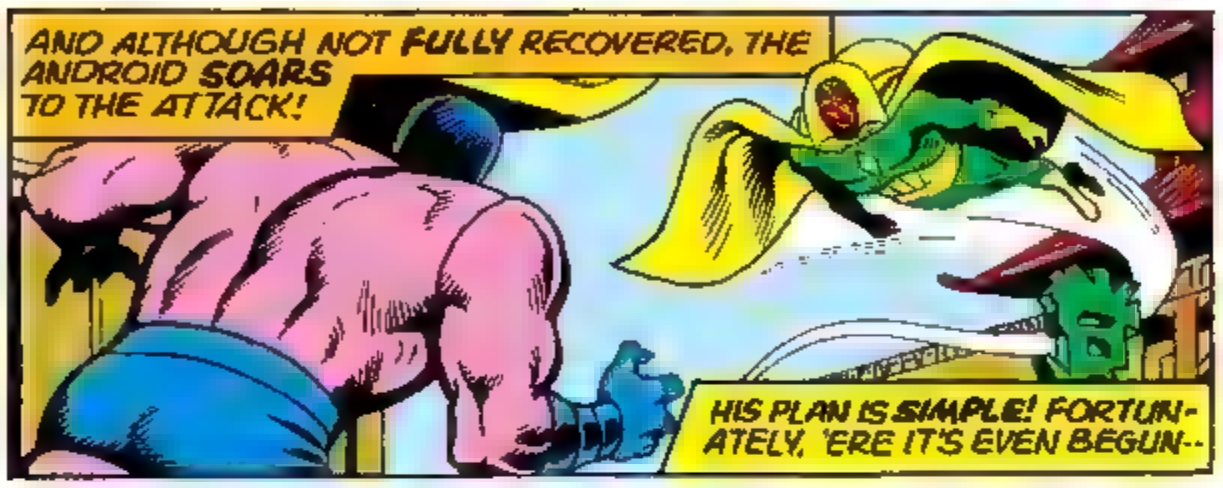

MEANWHILE--
OKAY, BIG BOY! I HIT THE JACKPOT WITH THIS ONCE--
--SO LET'S HAVE A REPLAY FOR THE WEST COAST!

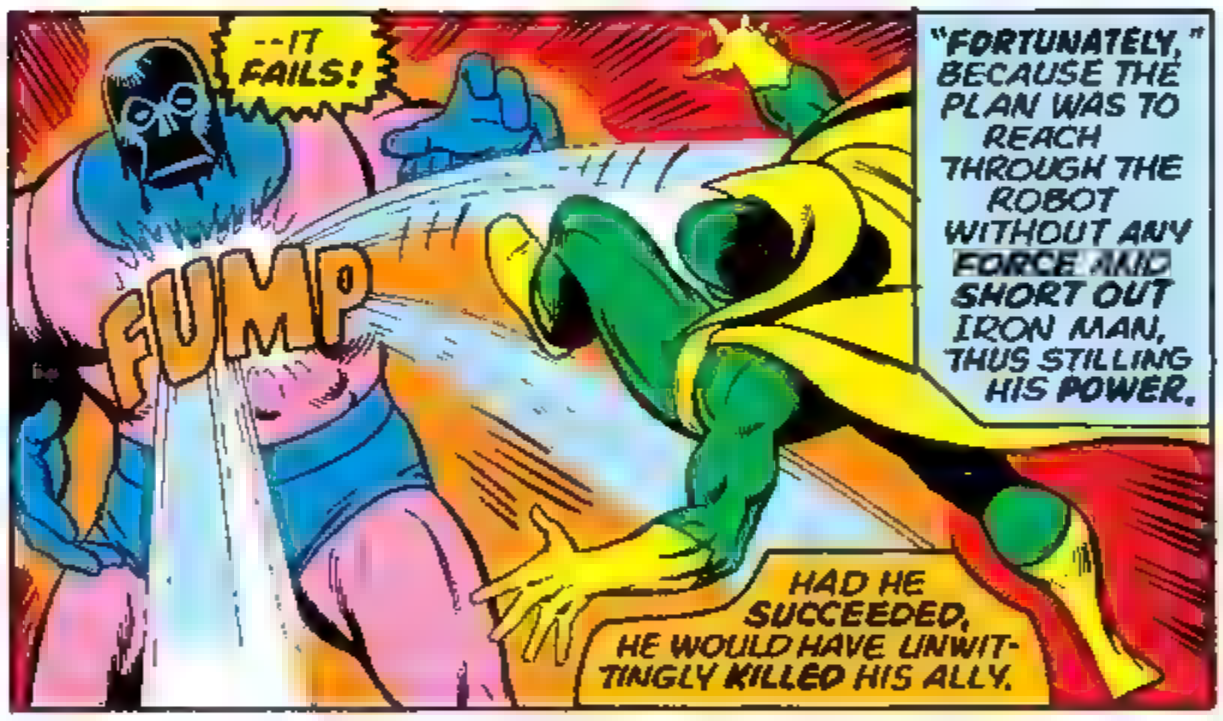

BLAM

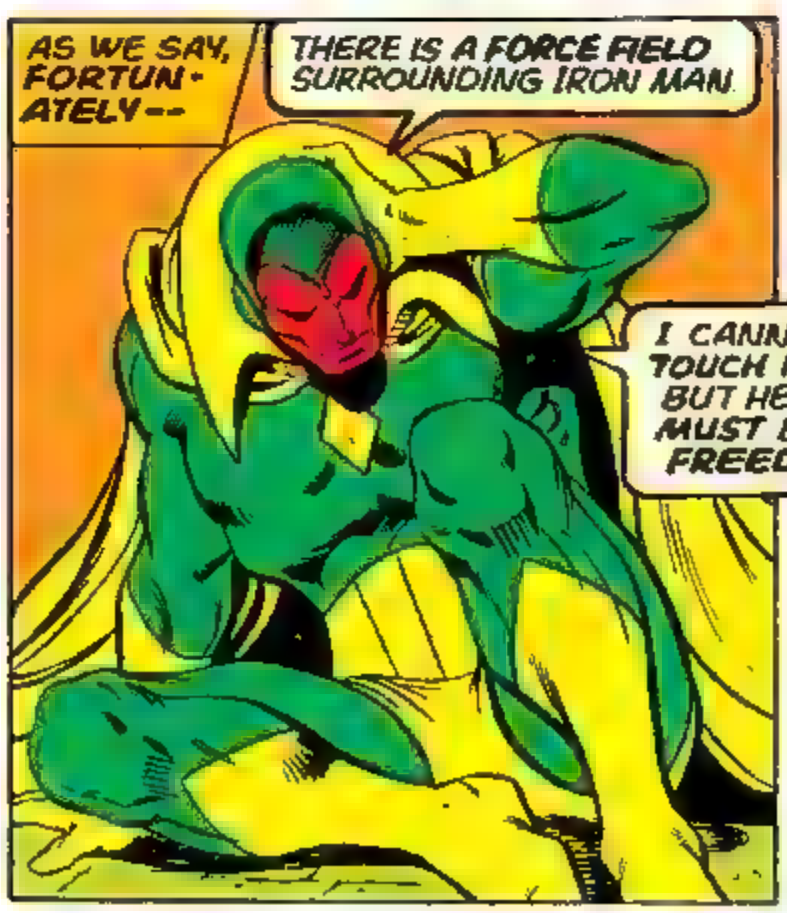

I GUESS NO-BODY LIKES RERUNS!
THAT WAS A STUPID THING TO DO! THE VISION CAN'T BE INSIDE THIS ONE!
LET ME TRY!

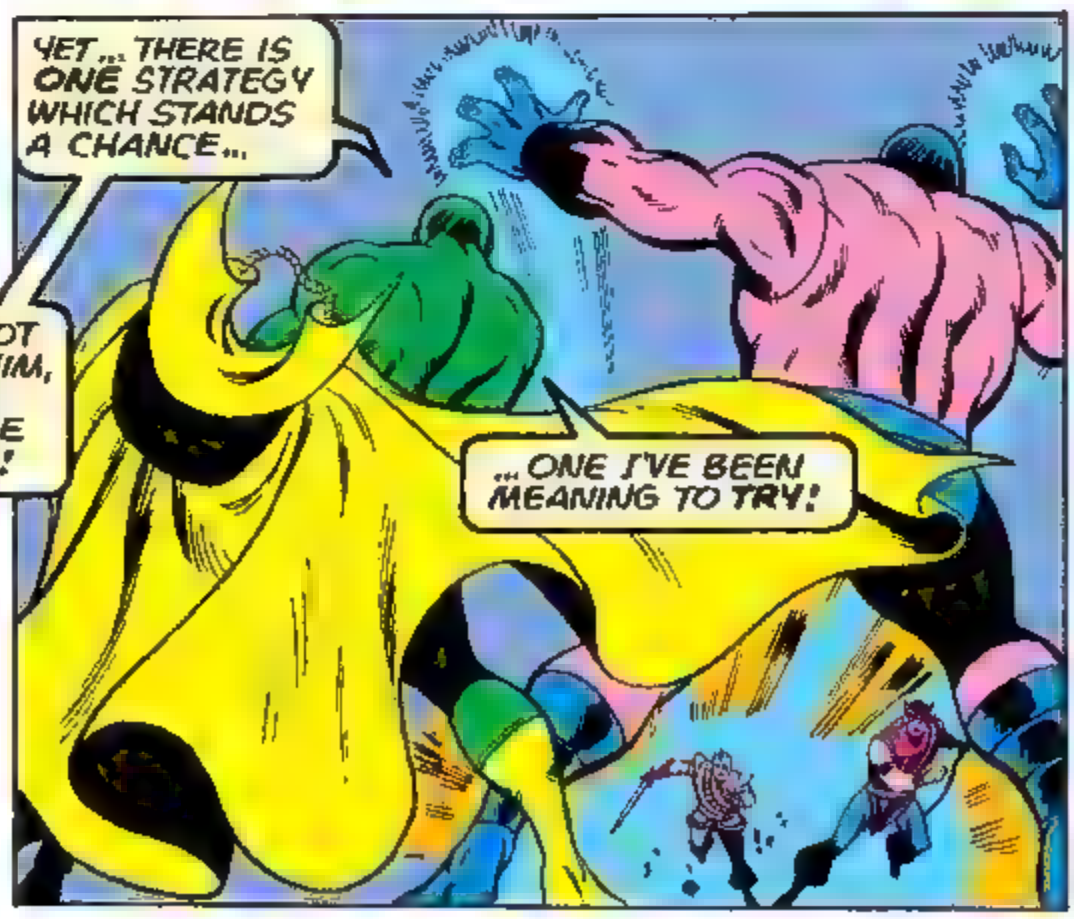

BLAST! THROWN FOR A LOSS AGAIN!
DESPITE MY BREAST-BEATING, I CAN'T EVER DO ANY-THING RIGHT!
ALL I'VE DONE SO FAR IS FIND THOSE WHO CAN!

THE CREATURE RUMBLES PAST THE SWORDSMAN, VISION. HE COMES FOR US!
THE DELAY MY FRIENDS CAUSED HAS ALLOWED MY RECOVERY, SIR, AND THIS IS THE AVENGERS' FIGHT. I'LL FACE HIM ALONE.

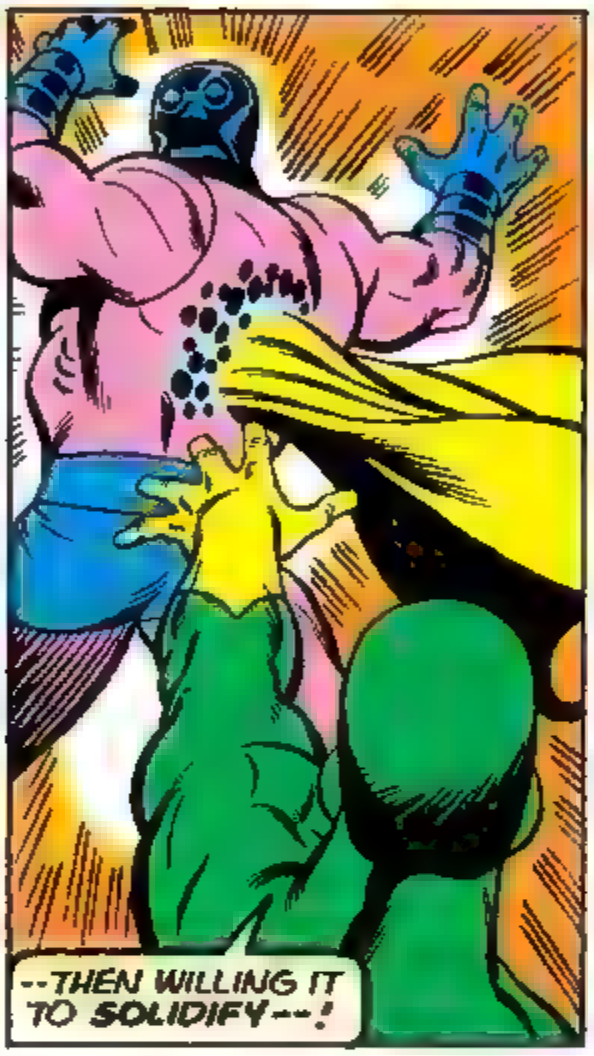

AND ALTHOUGH NOT FULLY RECOVERED, THE ANDROID SOARS TO THE ATTACK!
HIS PLAN IS SIMPLE! FORTUN-ATELY, 'ERE IT'S EVEN BEGUN--


--IT FAILS!
FUMP
"FORTUNATELY," BECAUSE THE PLAN WAS TO REACH THROUGH THE ROBOT WITHOUT ANY FORCE AND SHORT OUT IRON MAN, THUS STILLING HIS POWER.
HAD HE SUCCEEDED, HE WOULD HAVE UNWIT-TINGLY KILLED HIS ALLY.

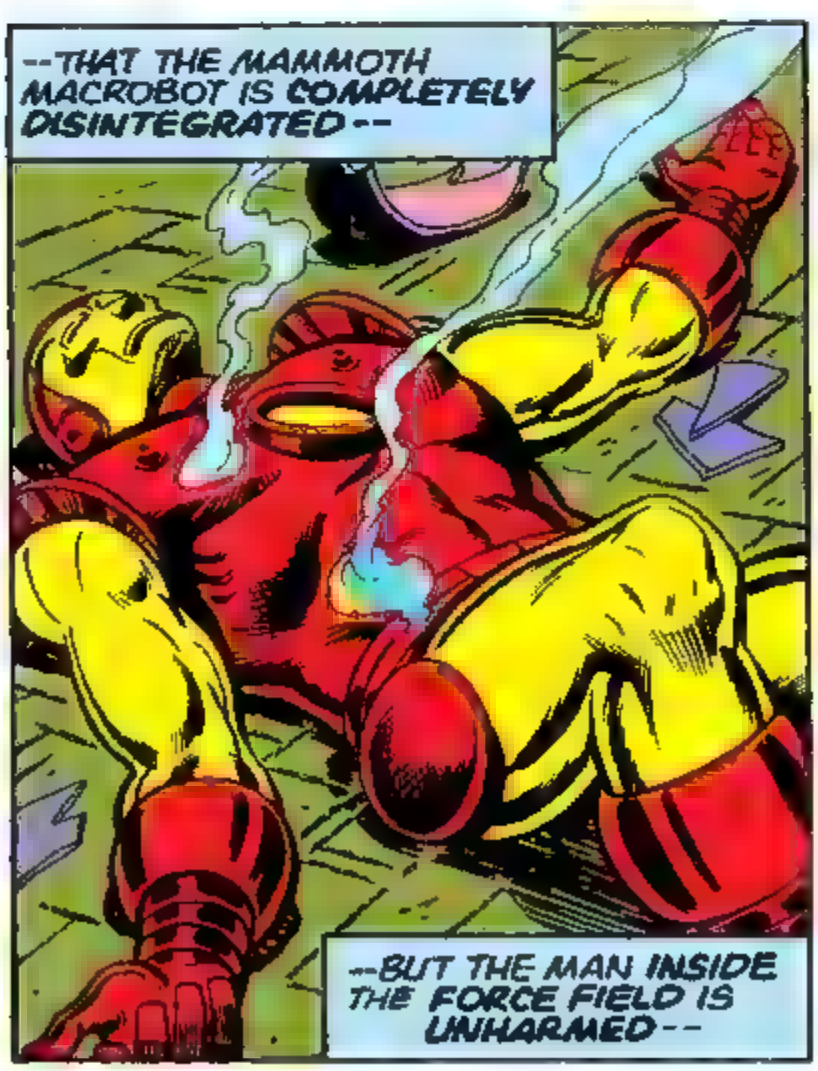

AS WE SAY, FORTUN-ATELY--
THERE IS A FORCE FIELD SURROUNDING IRON MAN.
I CANNOT TOUCH HIM, BUT HE MUST BE FREED!


YET... THERE IS ONE STRATEGY WHICH STANDS A CHANCE...
...ONE I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TRY!

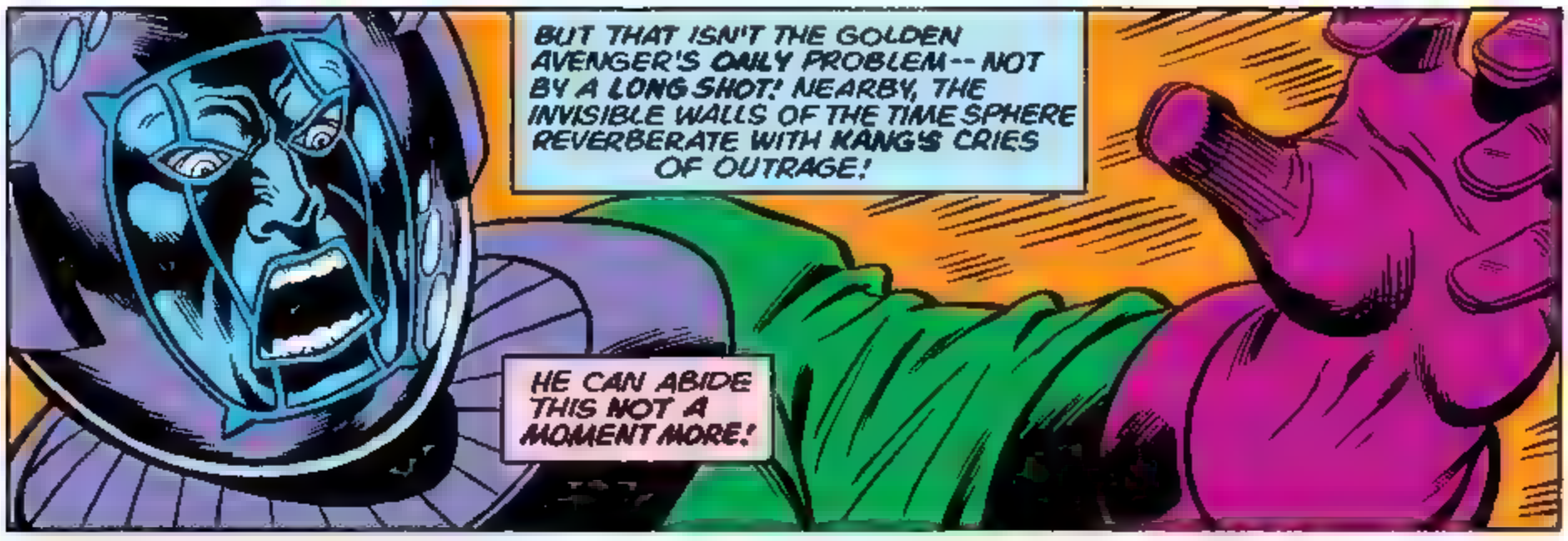
THE CLOTH OF MY SPECIAL COSTUME IS AS AMENABLE TO MY COMMAND AS MY OWN BODY.
BY ALTERING MY CAPE'S DENSITY TO NEAR ZERO, AND STUFFING IT INSIDE THE ROBOT, NEAR IRON MAN--

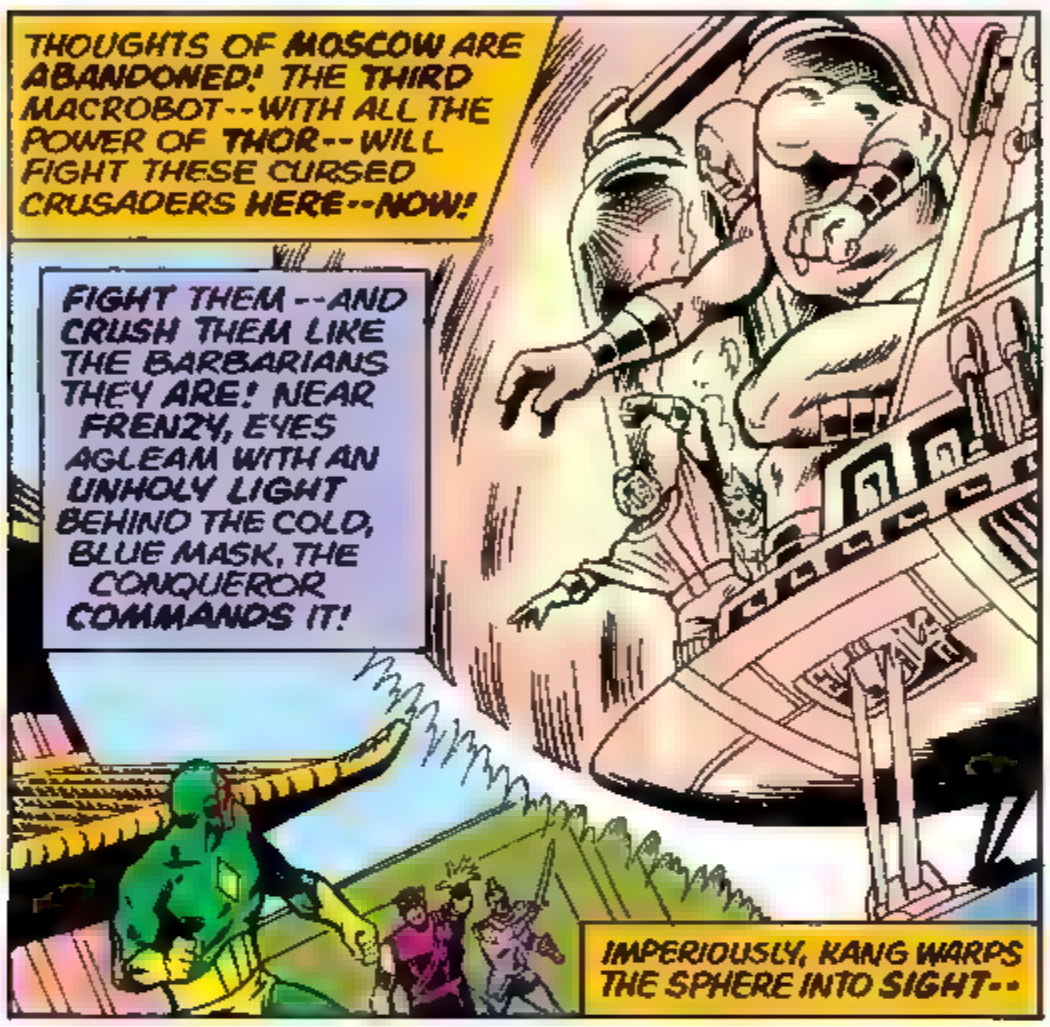

--THEN WILLING IT TO SOLIDIFY--!

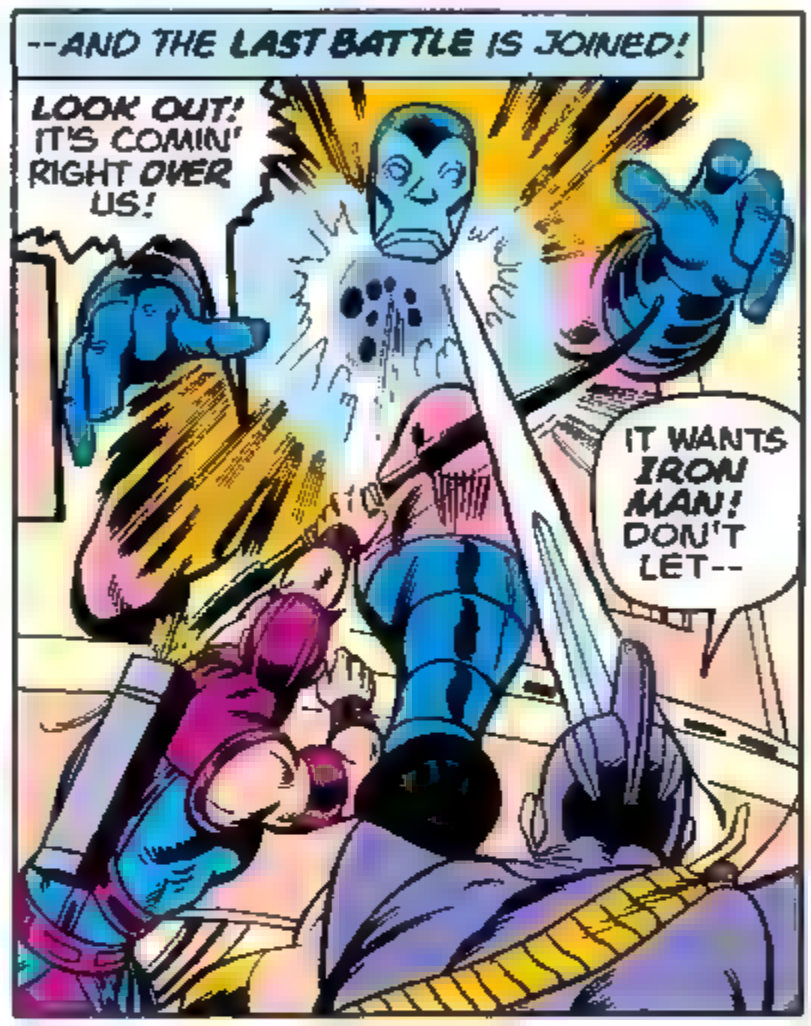
PATOOM!
"NO TWO THINGS MAY OCCUPY THE SAME SPACE AT THE SAME TIME." --OLD SCIENTIFIC LAW.
THE EXPLOSION IS SO VIOLENT--


--THAT THE MAMMOTH MACROBOT IS COMPLETELY DISINTEGRATED--
--BUT THE MAN INSIDE THE FORCE FIELD IS UNHARMED--

--AT LEAST, BY THE EXPLOSION!
SHELLHEAD! LONG TIME NO SEE!
HAWKEYE... ARMOR'S ABOUT DEAD...
A CHARGE? BUT WHERE COULD WE FIND ONE HERE--NOW?
LIGHT WON'T HELP IRON MAN!
...NEED A CHARGE...

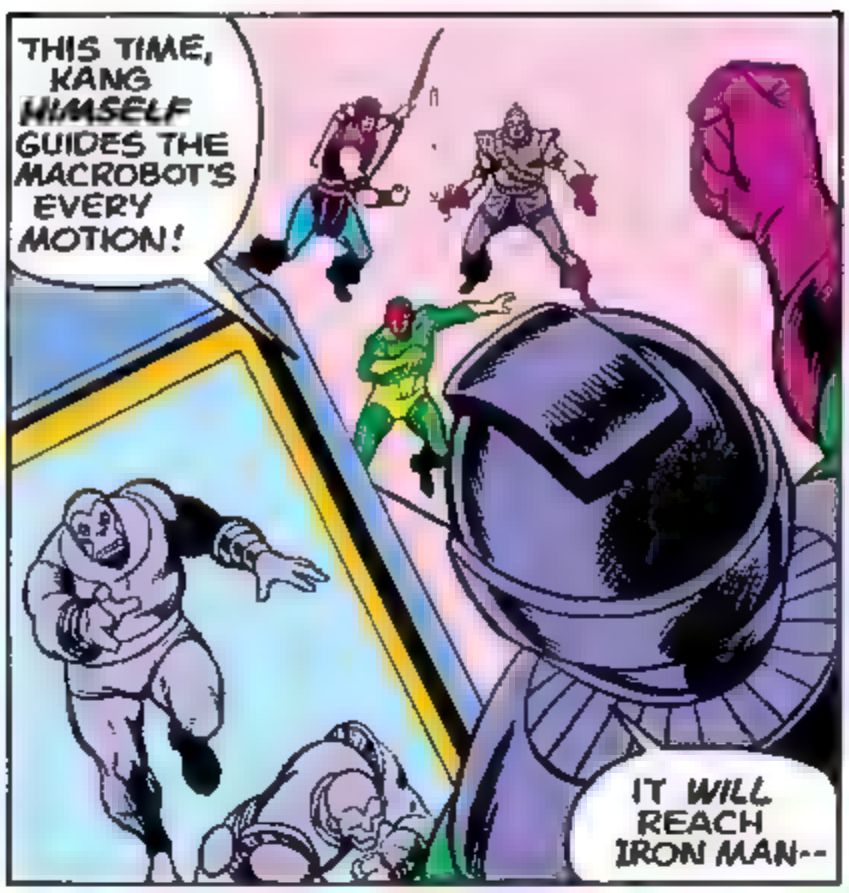

BUT THAT ISN'T THE GOLDEN AVENGER'S ONLY PROBLEM -- NOT BY A LONG SHOT! NEARBY, THE INVISIBLE WALLS OF THE TIME SPHERE REVERBERATE WITH KANG'S CRIES OF OUTRAGE!
HE CAN ABIDE THIS NOT A MOMENT MORE!


THOUGHTS OF MOSCOW ARE ABANDONED! THE THIRD MACROBOT -- WITH ALL THE POWER OF THOR -- WILL FIGHT THESE CURSED CRUSADERS HERE -- NOW!
FIGHT THEM -- AND CRUSH THEM LIKE THE BARBARIANS THEY ARE! NEAR FRENZY, EYES AGLEAM WITH AN UNHOLY LIGHT BEHIND THE COLD, BLUE MASK, THE CONQUEROR COMMANDS IT!
IMPERIOUSLY, KANG WARPS THE SPHERE INTO SIGHT --


-- AND THE LAST BATTLE IS JOINED!
LOOK OUT! IT'S COMIN' RIGHT OVER US!
IT WANTS IRON MAN! DON'T LET --

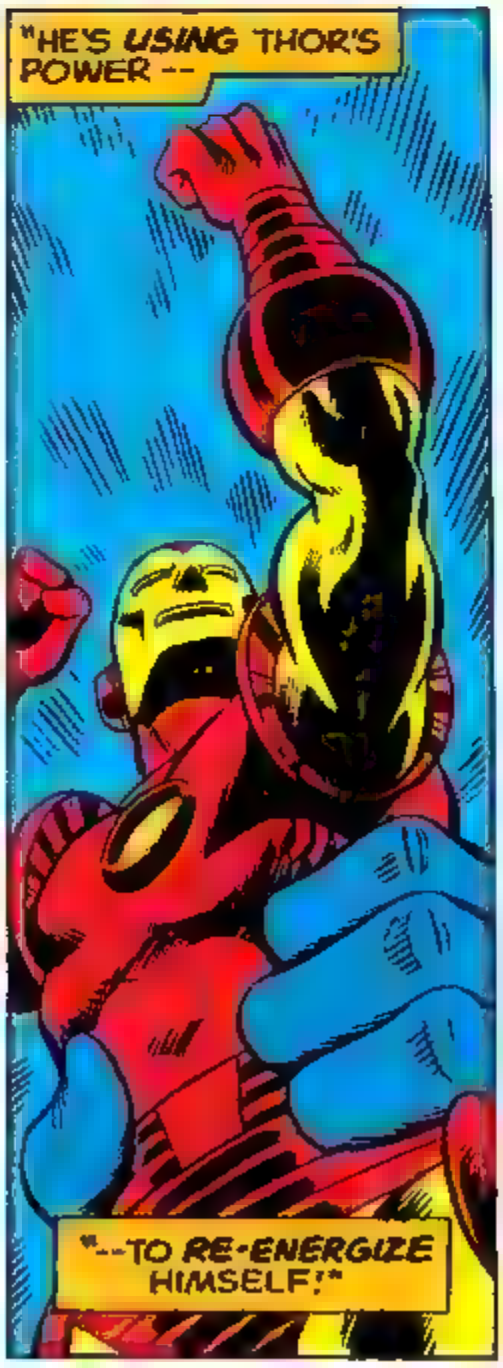
BUT HOW DO YOU STOP SOMETHING WITH THE STRENGTH OF A GOD? IF YOU'RE HAWKEYE OR THE SWORDSMAN, YOU --
WAM!
-- DON'T!

COME TO THINK OF IT, NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE --
KRAK!
-- YOU DON'T!

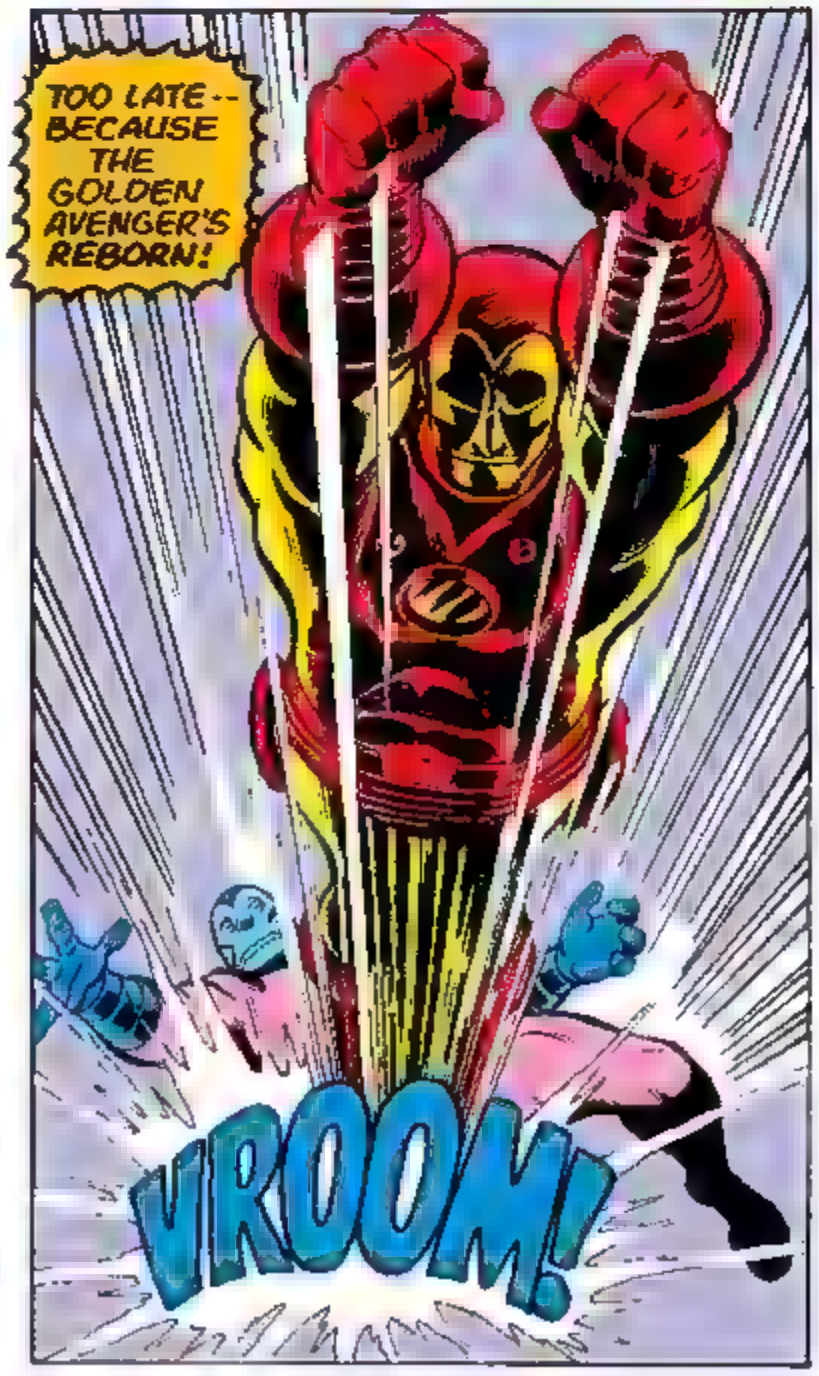

THIS TIME, KANG HIMSELF GUIDES THE MACROBOT'S EVERY MOTION!
IT WILL REACH IRON MAN--

--AND IT WILL KILL HIM!
A BLUE FLAME ARCS OVER THE ARMOR--
--AS THE RAW POWER OF THE PRIDE OF ASGARD RIPS THROUGH THAT GOLDEN SHELL!

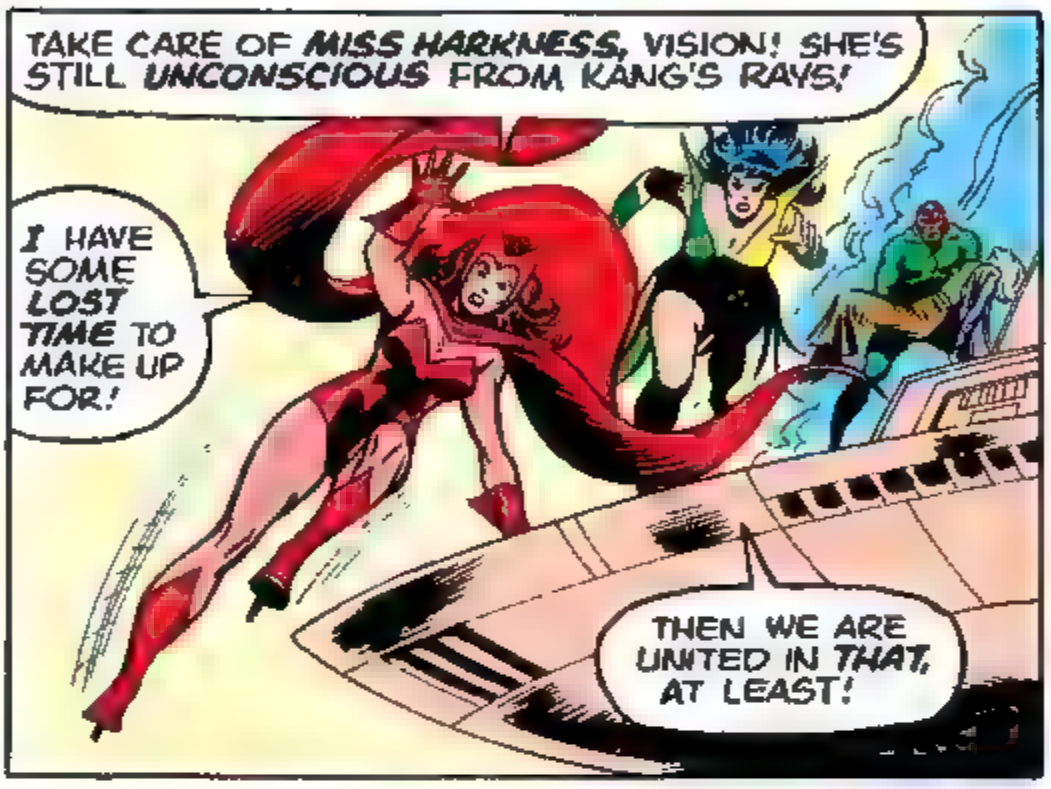
HE'S FRYIN' LIKE BAD BACON!
NO, WAIT! DON'T YOU SEE --
--IRON MAN'S NOT EVEN RESISTING, AND HE ALWAYS HAS THE SPUNK FOR THAT!


"HE'S USING THOR'S POWER --
"--TO RE-ENERGIZE HIMSELF!"

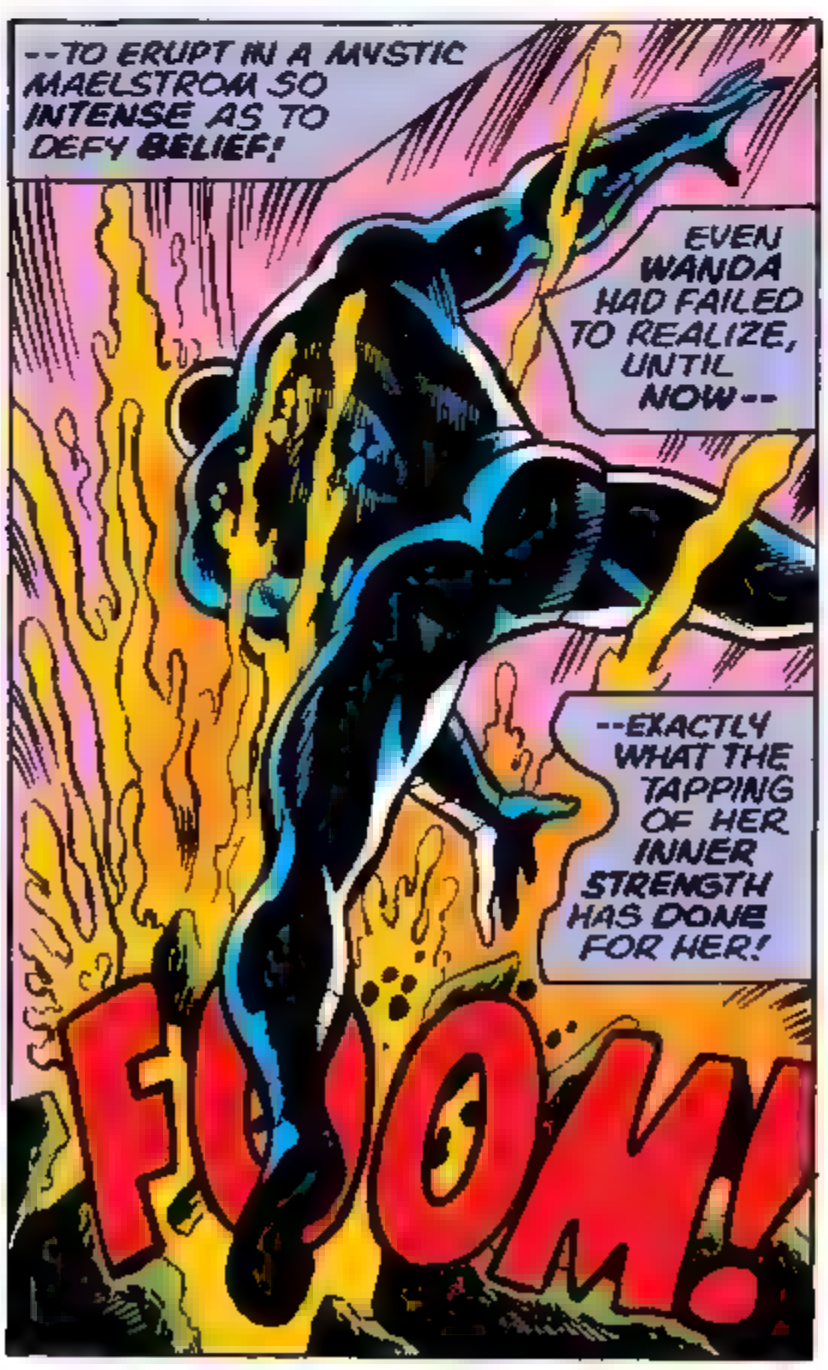
TOO LATE, THE TEMPORAL TYRANT REALIZES HE'S BEEN SNOOKERED!

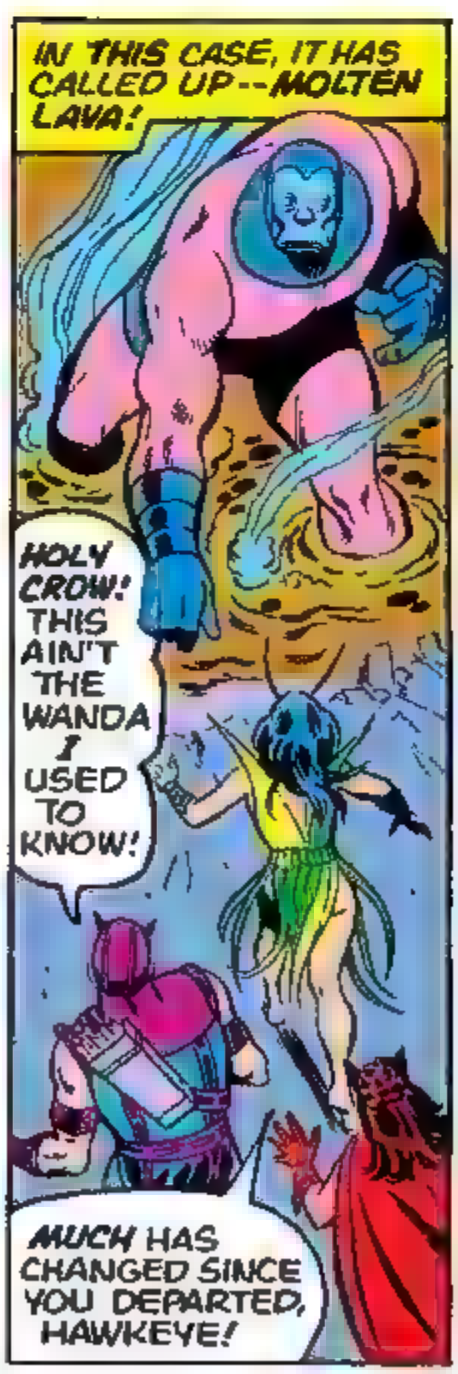

TOO LATE -- BECAUSE THE GOLDEN AVENGER'S REBORN!
VROOM!

AND MORE THAN THAT--
--WHILE KANG'S BEEN LOOKING ONE WAY, THE VISION'S BEEN SOARING ANOTHER!
SHOOMA!
HE HAS LOOSED US!


TAKE CARE OF MISS HARKNESS, VISION! SHE'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS FROM KANG'S RAYS!
I HAVE SOME LOST TIME TO MAKE UP FOR!
THEN WE ARE UNITED IN THAT, AT LEAST!

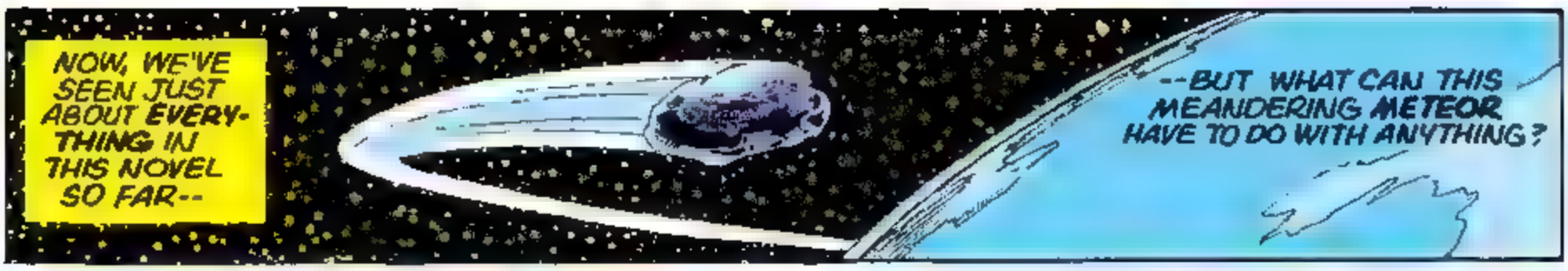
UNITED? YOU AND ME?
NEVER!
VIOLENT RAGE, LONG BOTTLED INSIDE, RAGES FORTH FROM HER FINGERS--

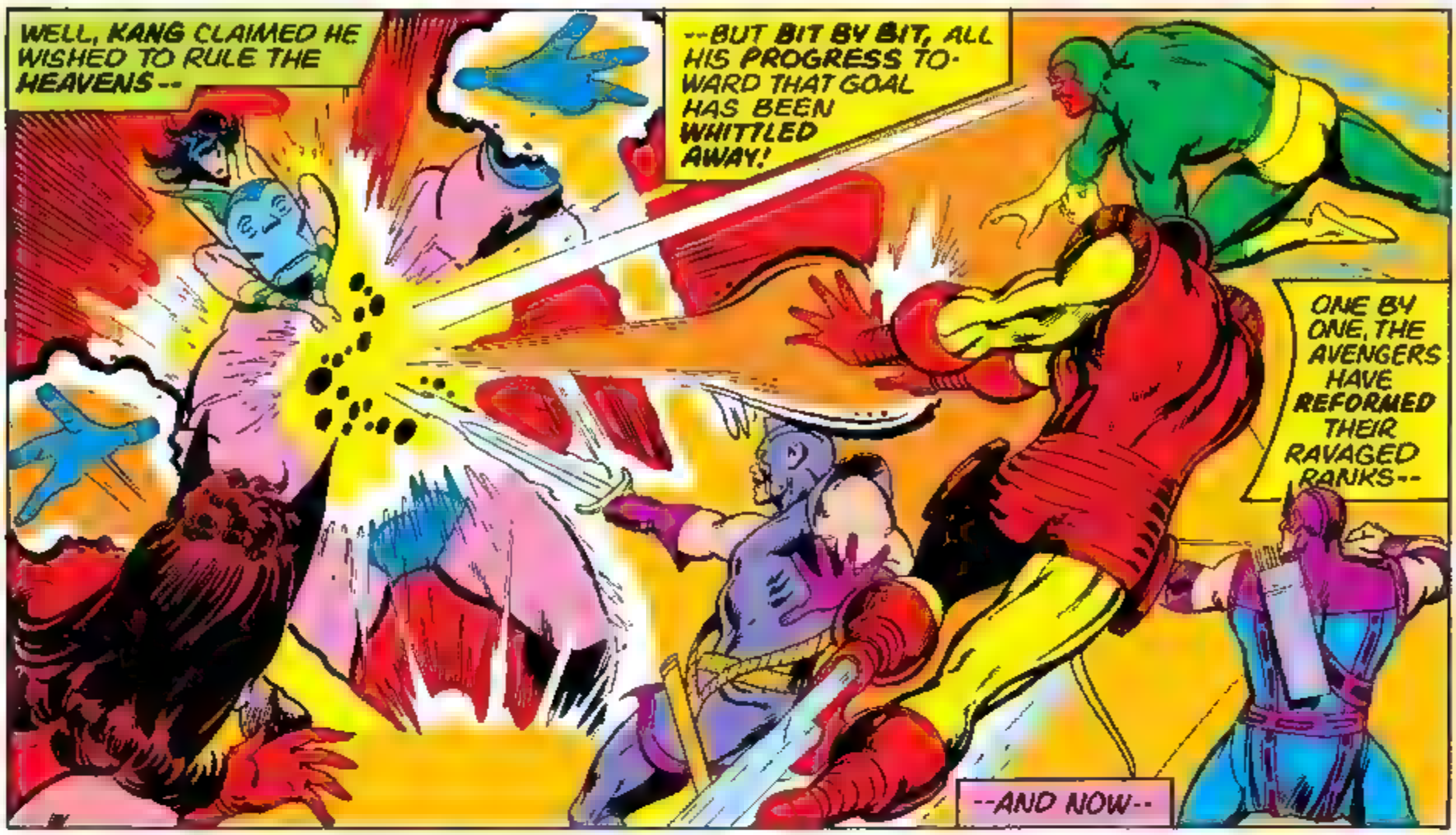

--TO ERUPT IN A MYSTIC MAELSTROM SO INTENSE AS TO DEFY BELIEF!
EVEN WANDA HAD FAILED TO REALIZE, UNTIL NOW--
--EXACTLY WHAT THE TAPPING OF HER INNER STRENGTH HAS DONE FOR HER!
FLOOM!


IN THIS CASE, IT HAS CALLED UP--MOLTEN LAVA!
HOLY CROW! THIS AIN'T THE WANDA I USED TO KNOW!
MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE YOU DEPARTED, HAWKEYE!

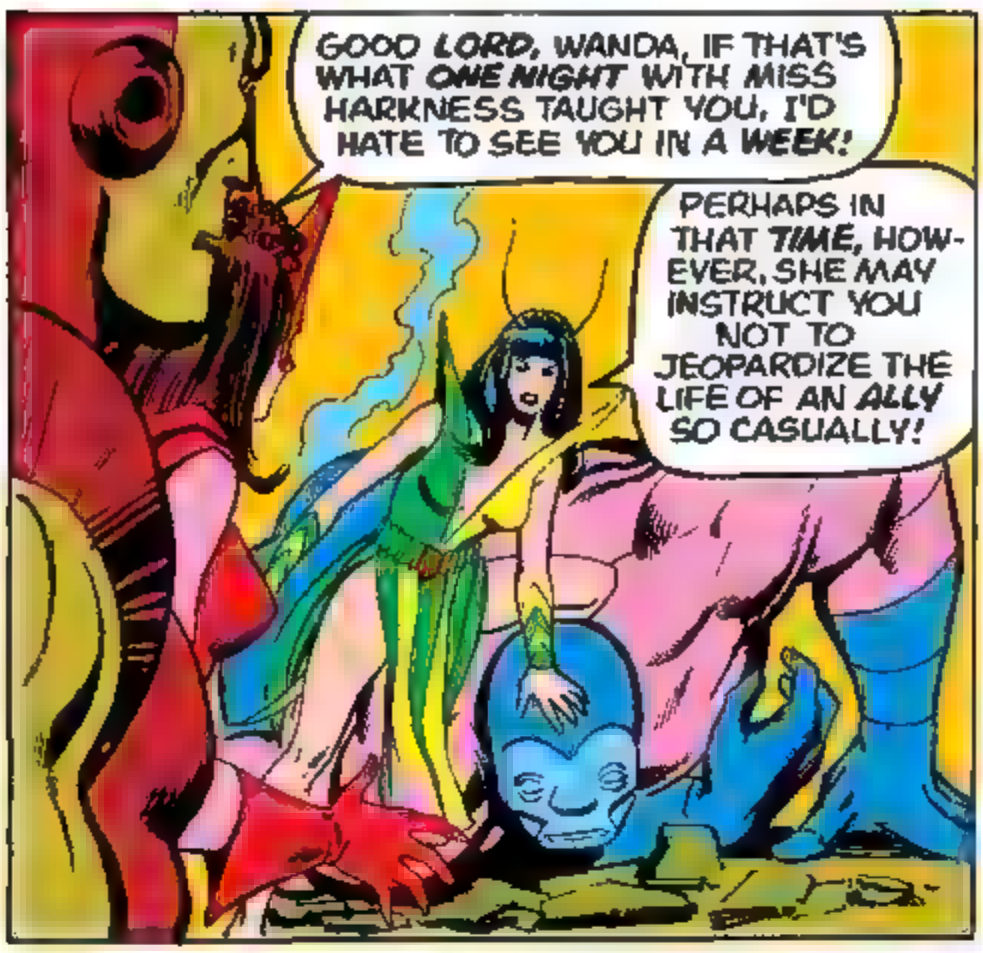
NEITHER DO YOU KNOW--
--THE SKILL OF MANTIS!

THEN, ALL THESE AVENGERS SET TO WORK WITH A VENGEANCE!


NOW, WE'VE SEEN JUST ABOUT EVERY-THING IN THIS NOVEL SO FAR--
--BUT WHAT CAN THIS MEANDERING METEOR HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

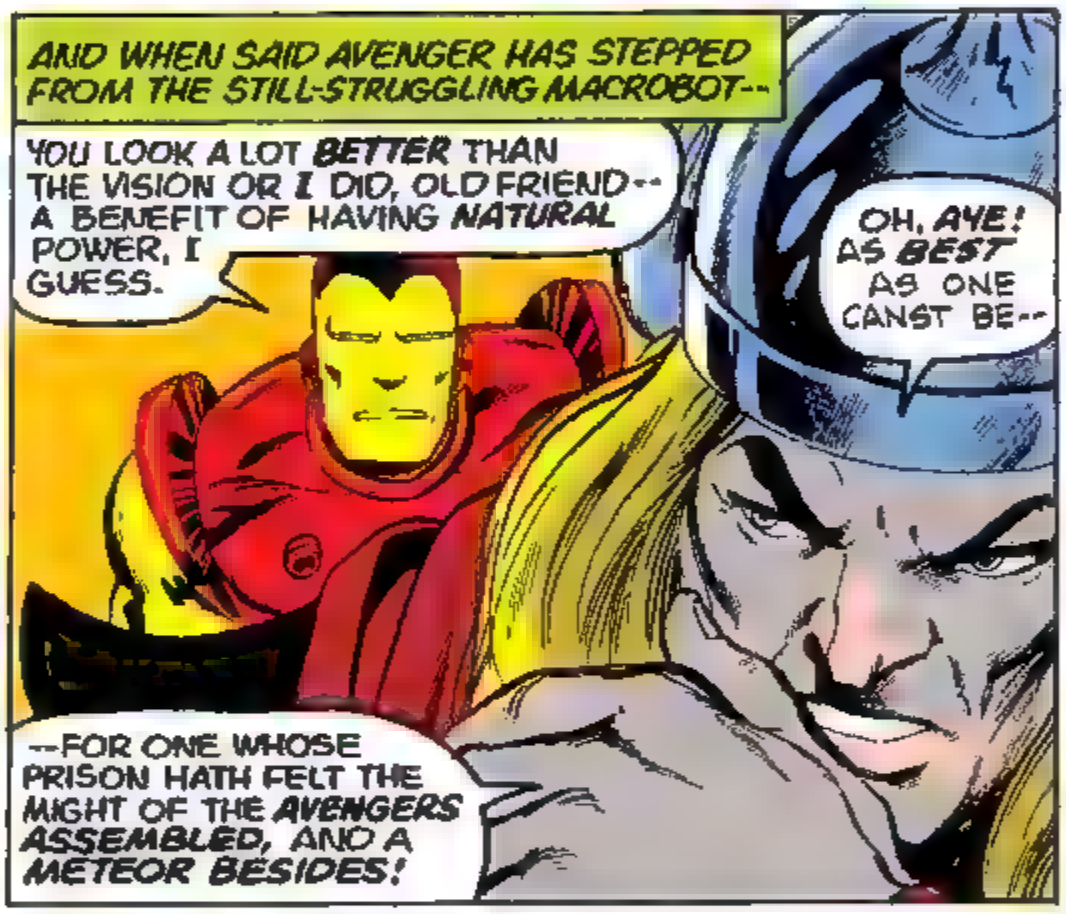

WELL, KANG CLAIMED HE WISHED TO RULE THE HEAVENS--
--BUT BIT BY BIT, ALL HIS PROGRESS TO-WARD THAT GOAL HAS BEEN WHITTLED AWAY!
ONE BY ONE, THE AVENGERS HAVE REFORMED THEIR RAVAGED RANKS--
--AND NOW--

--WITH ONE FINAL HEX--
--A HEX HURLED FROM THE DEPTHS OF WANDA'S SEETHING SOUL--
--EVEN THE HEAVENS TURN AGAINST KANG'S CAUSE!
BA-WOM!

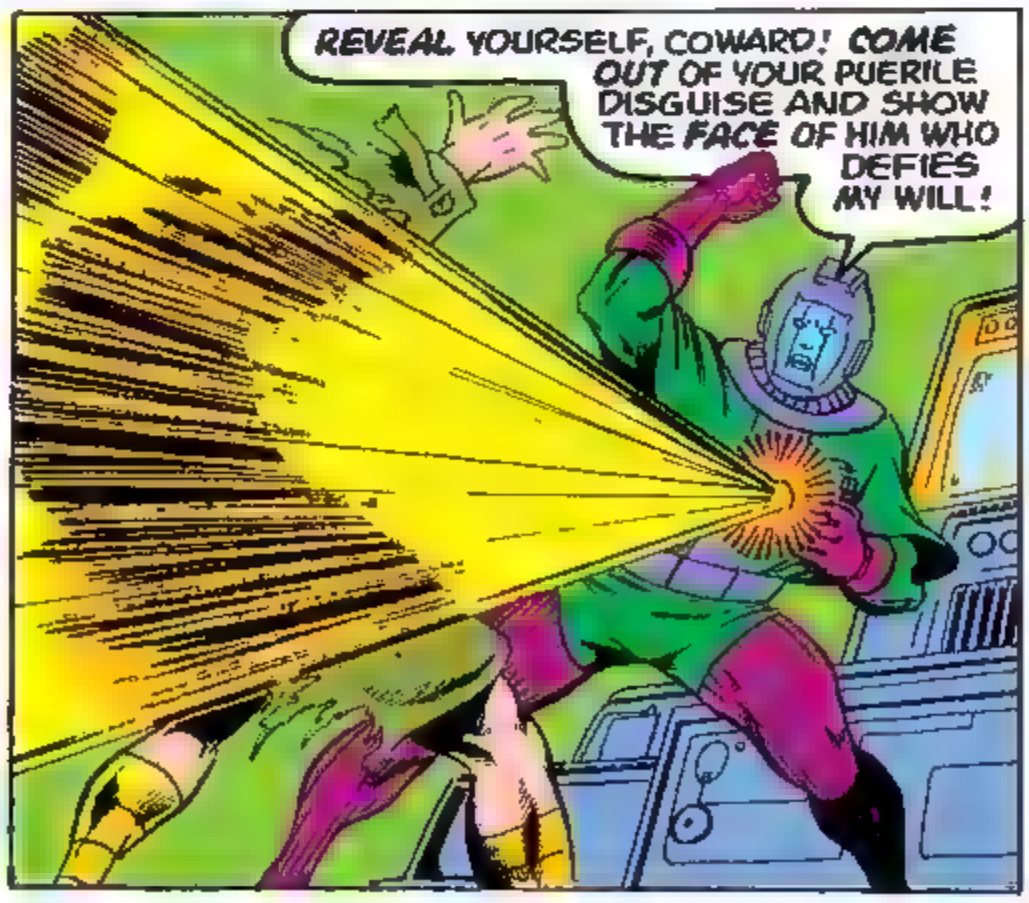

GOOD LORD, WANDA, IF THAT'S WHAT ONE NIGHT WITH MISS HARKNESS TAUGHT YOU, I'D HATE TO SEE YOU IN A WEEK!
PERHAPS IN THAT TIME, HOWEVER, SHE MAY INSTRUCT YOU NOT TO JEOPARDIZE THE LIFE OF AN ALLY SO CASUALLY!

THE METEOR COULD NOT HAVE STRUCK MORE CLOSELY TO THIS ONE WITHOUT--
THAT IS GOOD! THERE HAS BEEN TOO MUCH DESTRUCTION ALREADY!
HALA! THE MACHINE YET MOVES! EVEN THAT COULD NOT DESTROY IT!

I HAVE REFRAINED FROM ACTION UNLESS NO OTHER OPTION PRESENTED ITSELF, FOR REASONS I MUST SHORTLY EXPLAIN--
--YET TO FREE THE FINAL AVENGER AS I FREED THE VISION IS A PRIVILEGE AND A PLEASURE!


AND WHEN SAID AVENGER HAS STEPPED FROM THE STILL-STRUGGLING MACROBOT--
YOU LOOK A LOT BETTER THAN THE VISION OR I DID, OLD FRIEND-- A BENEFIT OF HAVING NATURAL POWER, I GUESS.
OH, AYE! AS BEST AS ONE CANST BE--
--FOR ONE WHOSE PRISON HATH FELT THE MIGHT OF THE AVENGERS ASSEMBLED, AND A METEOR BESIDES!

YOUR WAR HAS ENDED, KANG! THERE IS NOTHING LEFT!
HEED YOUR OWN WORDS--*
--AND RECOGNIZE YOUR LOSS!
YOU DARE SPEAK THUS TO KANG?
*AVENGERS #129, PAGE 5. --STEVE.


REVEAL YOURSELF, COWARD! COME OUT OF YOUR PUERILE DISGUISE AND SHOW THE FACE OF HIM WHO DEFIES MY WILL!

KANG THE CONQUEROR LOOKS AT HIS NEMESIS--

--AND HE CANNOT DARE TO BELIEVE IT!

IT IS ALL TOO -- INSANE!

BREAK: REFLECTIONS OF THE PHARAOH...

"IN MY PAST, IN THIS MOMENT, I BEHELD RAMA-TUT THROUGH THE EYES OF KANG-- AND NOW I BEHOLD KANG THROUGH THE EYES OF RAMA-TUT! THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I THOUGHT TO AVOID THIS CONFRONTATION--BUT IF I HAD, THE MADONNA'S FATE WOULD BE ON MY HEAD--

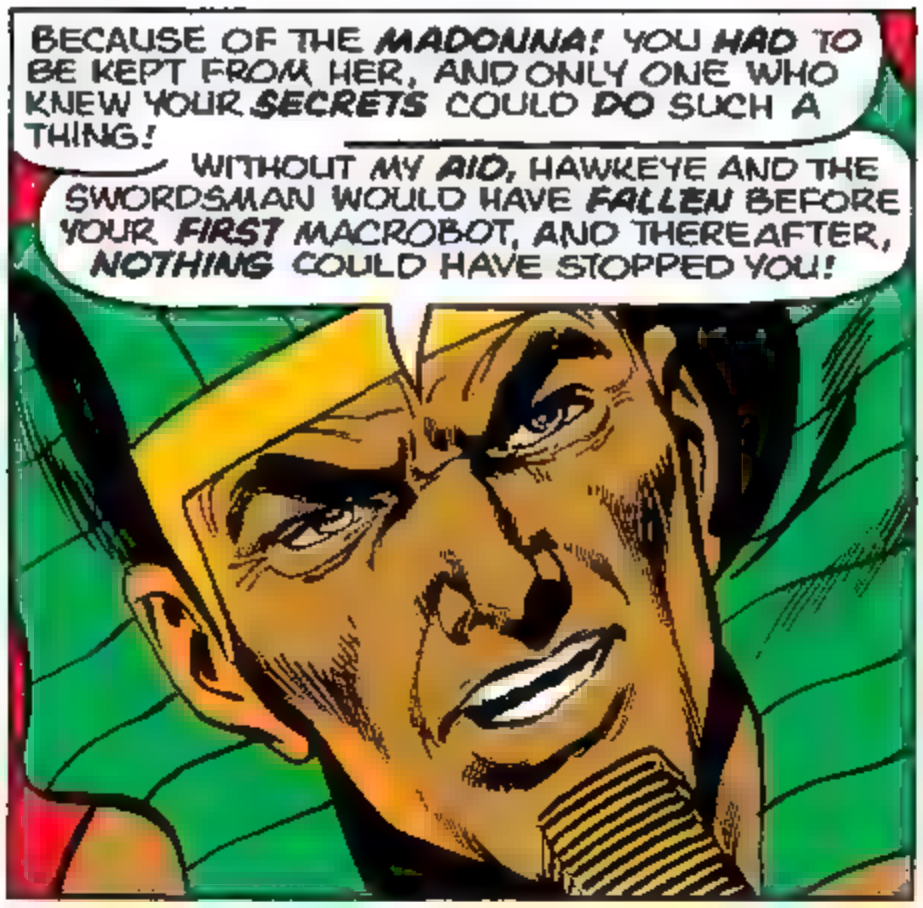
"--AND I WOULD NEVER BE!

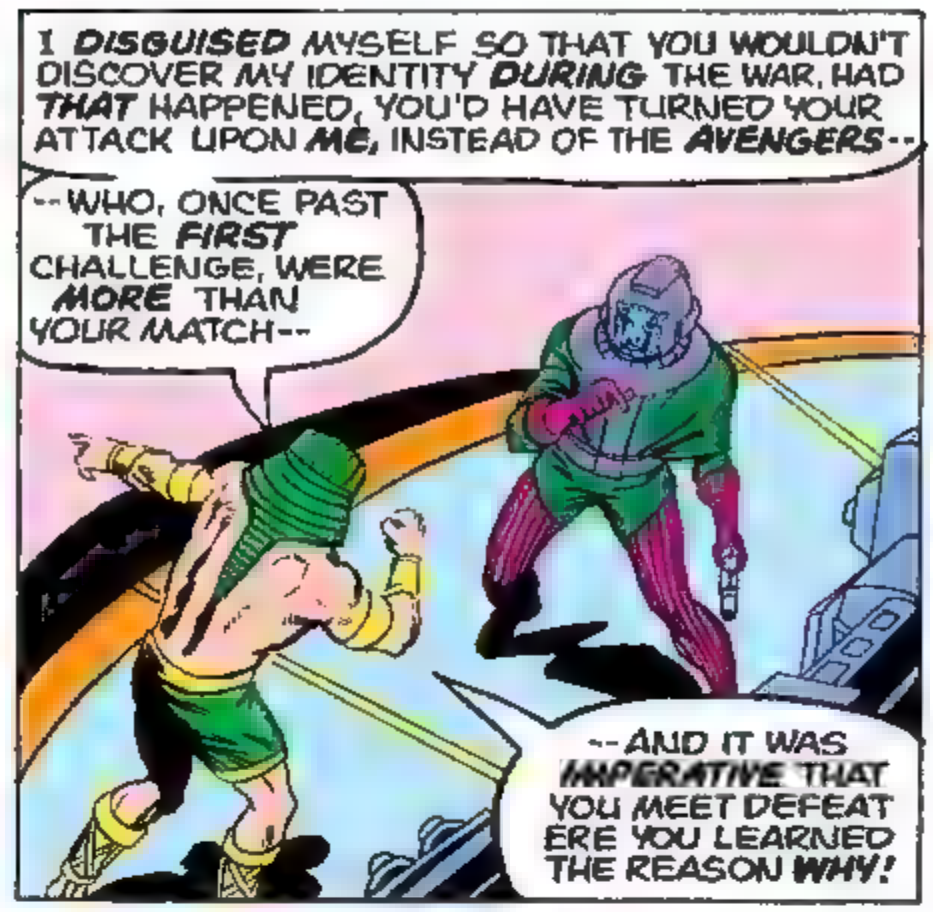
"THIS IS THE ONLY CRUCIAL INSTANT--

"--FOR AS THE TWO OF US CLOSE, TIME RUPTURES!

"THE PAST COLLIDES WITH THE FUTURE-- TO SPILL INTO THE PRESENT!"

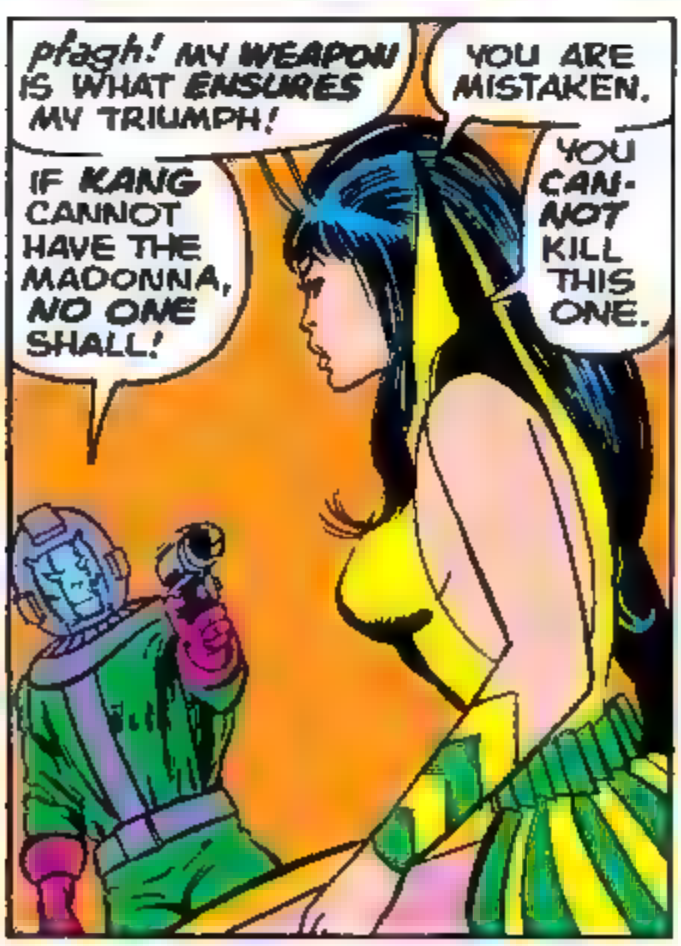
TIME BECOMES VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE!
IN THE MADDENING MIDST OF EVERYWHEN, NOT ALL THAT IS SEEN IS UNDERSTOOD. TO THE AVENGERS, MUCH OF WHAT BILLOWS BEFORE THEM IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A DREAM...
...BUT KANG UNDERSTANDS WHAT HE NEEDS TO KNOW!
MANTIS! MANTIS IS THE MADONNA!
I FEEL HER FILLING THE FUTURE LIKE A FLOWER COMING TO BLOOM!
AND YOU--
--YOU ARE ME!
BUT HOW? WHY?


BECAUSE OF THE MADONNA! YOU HAD TO BE KEPT FROM HER, AND ONLY ONE WHO KNEW YOUR SECRETS COULD DO SUCH A THING!
WITHOUT MY AID, HAWKEYE AND THE SWORDSMAN WOULD HAVE FALLEN BEFORE YOUR FIRST MACROBOT, AND THEREAFTER, NOTHING COULD HAVE STOPPED YOU!


I DISGUISED MYSELF SO THAT YOU WOULDN'T DISCOVER MY IDENTITY DURING THE WAR. HAD THAT HAPPENED, YOU'D HAVE TURNED YOUR ATTACK UPON ME, INSTEAD OF THE AVENGERS--
--WHO, ONCE PAST THE FIRST CHALLENGE, WERE MORE THAN YOUR MATCH--
--AND IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU MEET DEFEAT ERE YOU LEARNED THE REASON WHY!

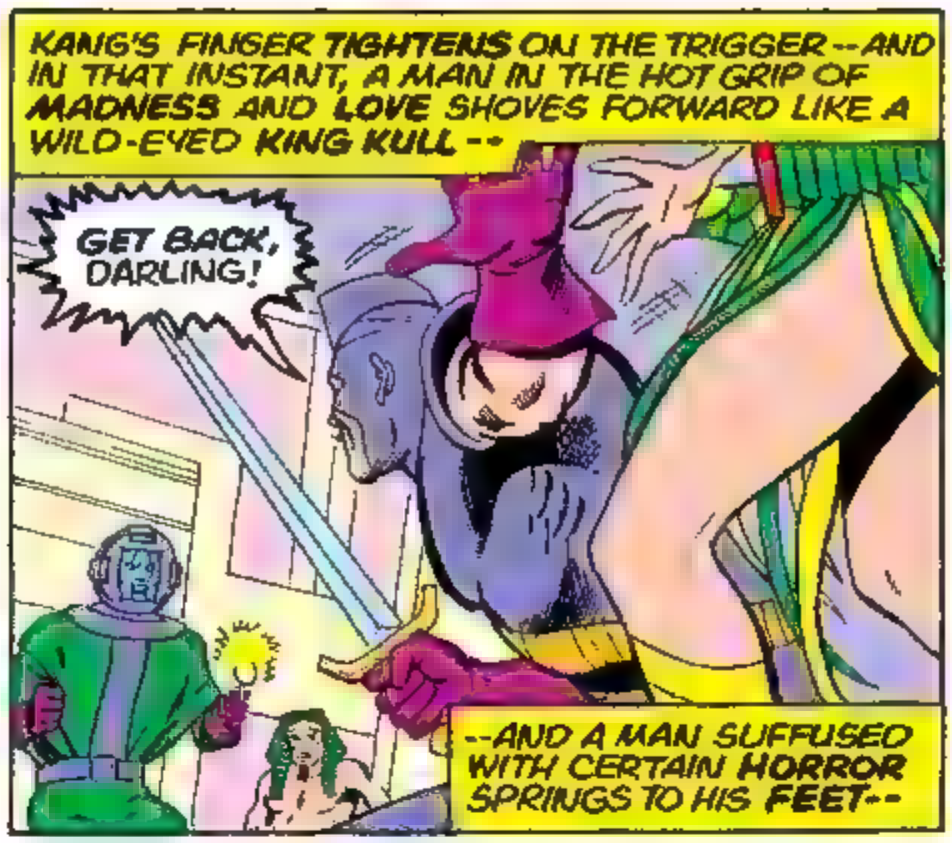
THIS IS MADNESS! ARE YOU SAYING THAT I WILL COME HERE, AS YOU, TO BRING ABOUT MY OWN ROUT?
IMPOSSIBLE! NOW THAT I KNOW OF THIS, I SHALL NEVER ALLOW IT!

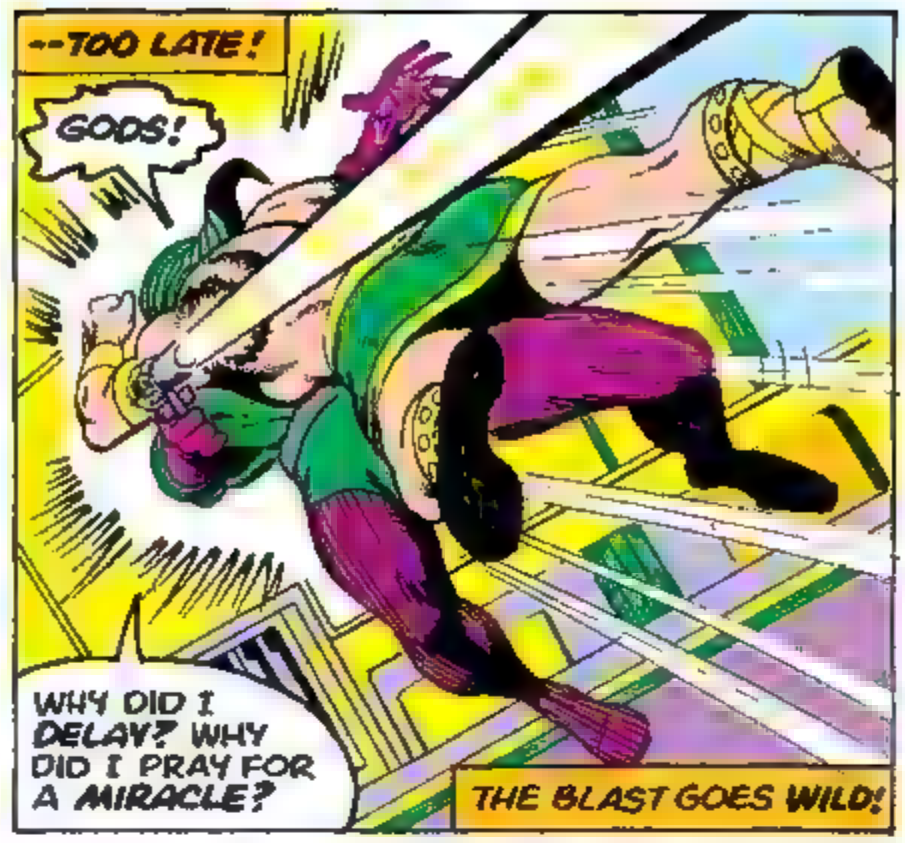
YOU CANNOT AVOID IT! FUTURE EVENTS WILL INEXORABLY LEAD YOU HERE! EACH OF US HAS A DESTINY, KANG! YOU SOUGHT THE MADONNA'S... BUT FOUND YOUR OWN!
IN TIME, YOU WILL ACCEPT THIS! FOR NOW, SIMPLY BELIEVE--AND PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPON!

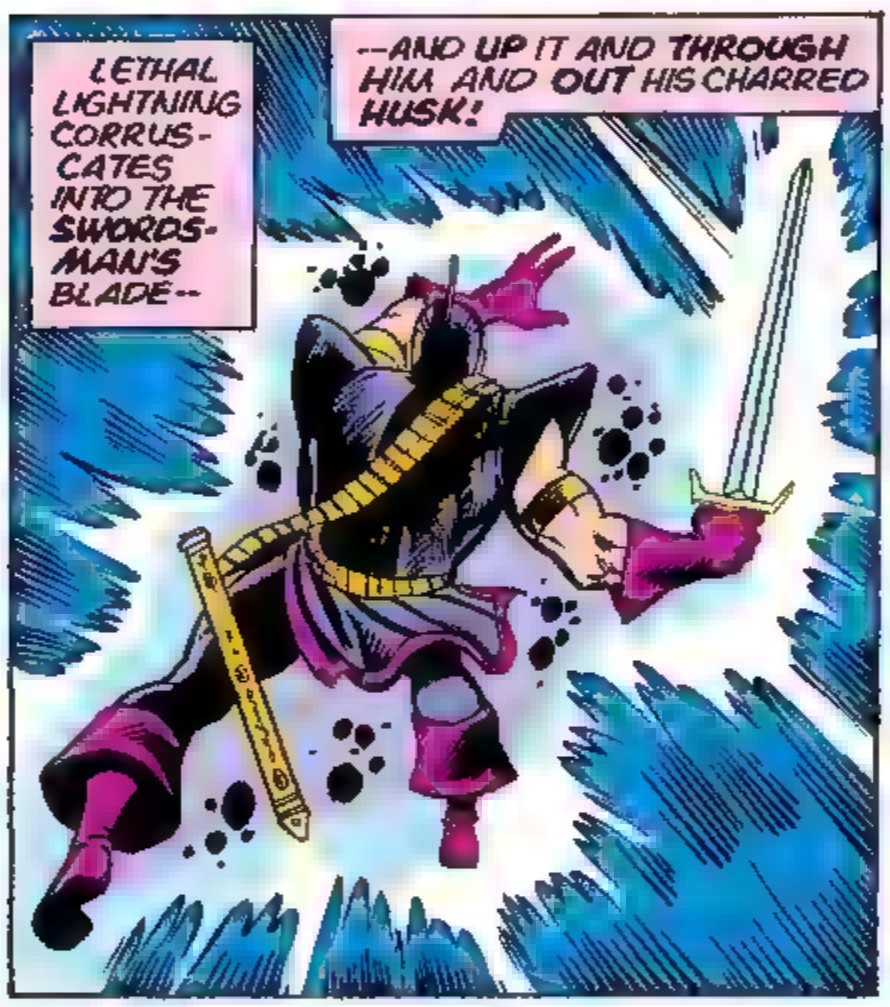

pfagh! MY WEAPON IS WHAT ENSURES MY TRIUMPH!
YOU ARE MISTAKEN.
IF KANG CANNOT HAVE THE MADONNA, NO ONE SHALL!
YOU CAN-NOT KILL THIS ONE.

SHE IS AS AMAZED AS ANY AT THIS TALK OF MADONNAS--
--BUT IF SHE WERE TO DIE TODAY, RAMA-TUT WOULD NOT HAVE DONE WHAT HE HAS. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FUTILE.
HEED HIM. PUT AWAY YOUR WEAPON.

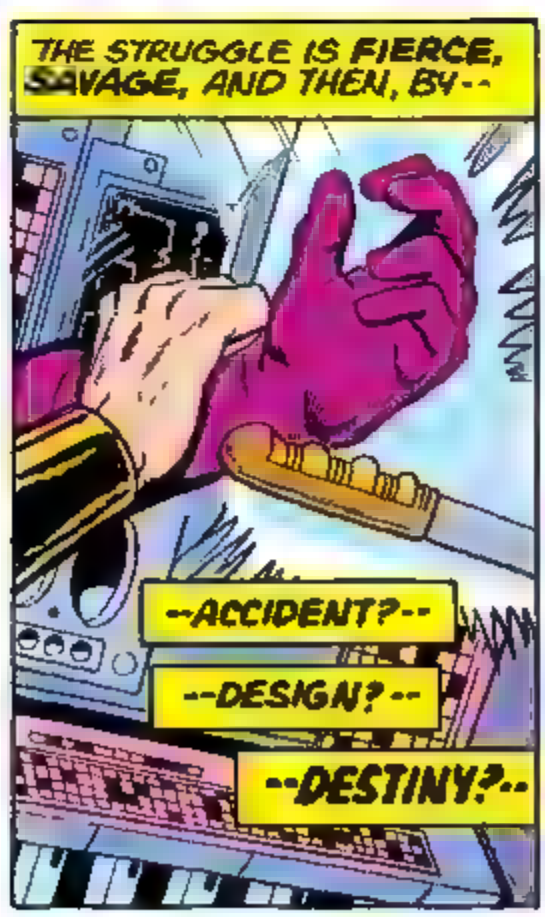
YOU PLACE YOUR FAITH IN A FALSE PROPHET, MANTIS!
I CAN KILL YOU--AND I WILL!

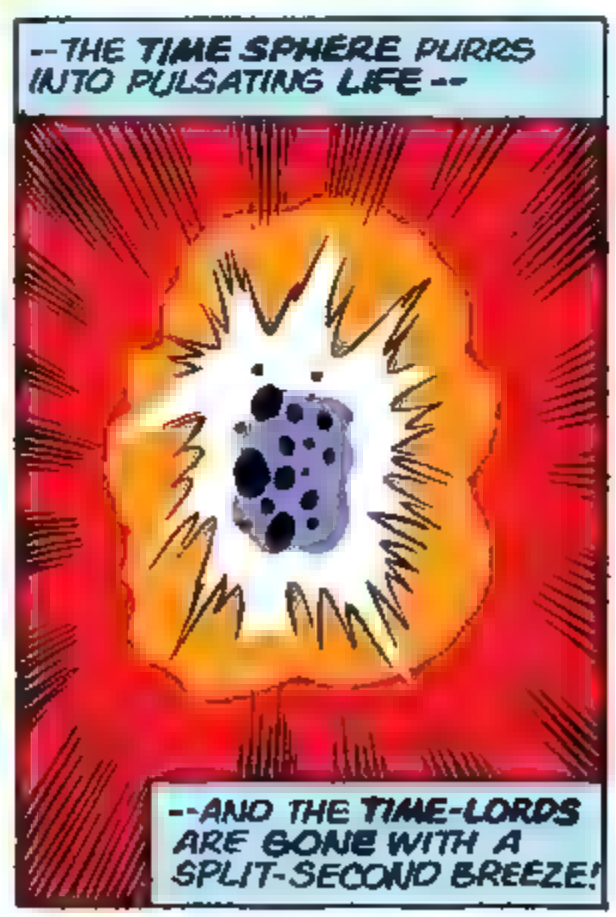

KANG'S FINGER TIGHTENS ON THE TRIGGER -- AND IN THAT INSTANT, A MAN IN THE HOT GRIP OF MADNESS AND LOVE SHOVES FORWARD LIKE A WILD-EYED KING KULL --
GET BACK, DARLING!
--AND A MAN SUFFUSED WITH CERTAIN HORROR SPRINGS TO HIS FEET--


--TOO LATE!
GODS!
WHY DID I DELAY? WHY DID I PRAY FOR A MIRACLE?
THE BLAST GOES WILD!

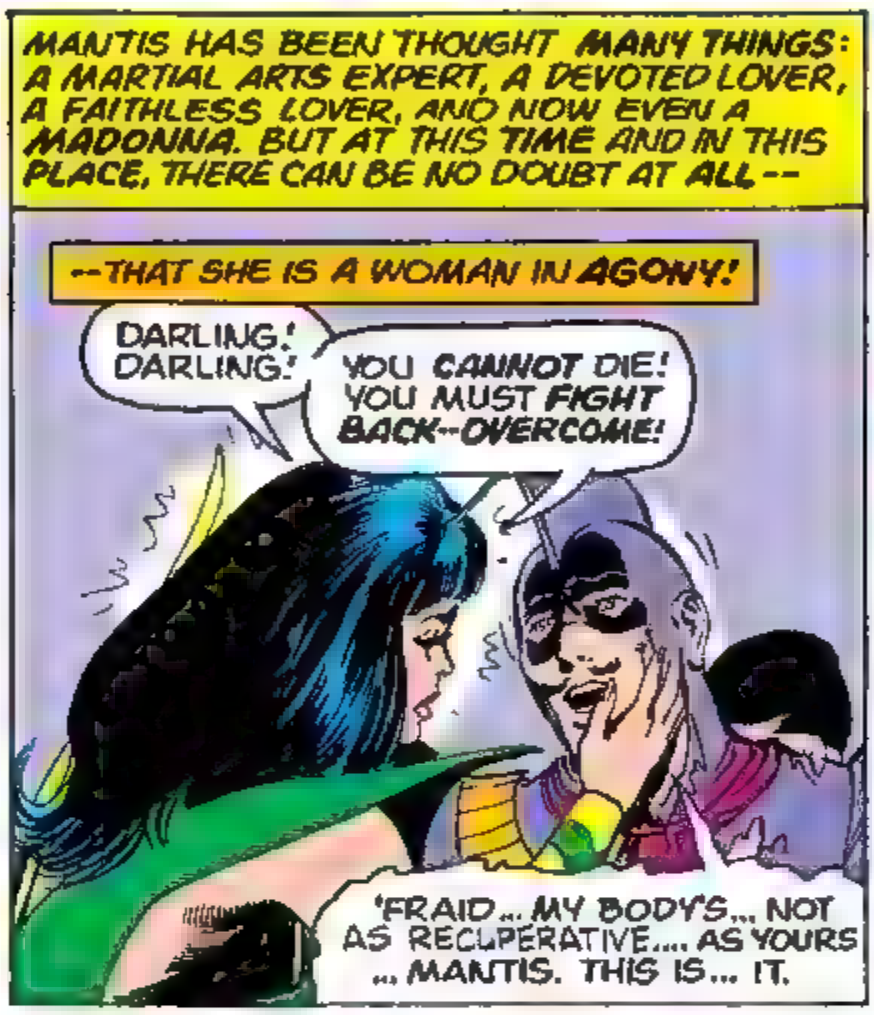

LETHAL LIGHTNING CORRUS-CATES INTO THE SWORDS-MAN'S BLADE--
--AND UP IT AND THROUGH HIM AND OUT HIS CHARRED HUSK!

NOTHING CHANGES! I KNEW YOU WOULD FIRE, BUT I HELD BACK, HOPING MY REVELATIONS COULD CHANGE THIS ONE THING!
I KNEW, BUT I COULD NOT PREVENT IT--!


THE STRUGGLE IS FIERCE, SAVAGE, AND THEN, BY--
--ACCIDENT?--
--DESIGN?--
--DESTINY?--

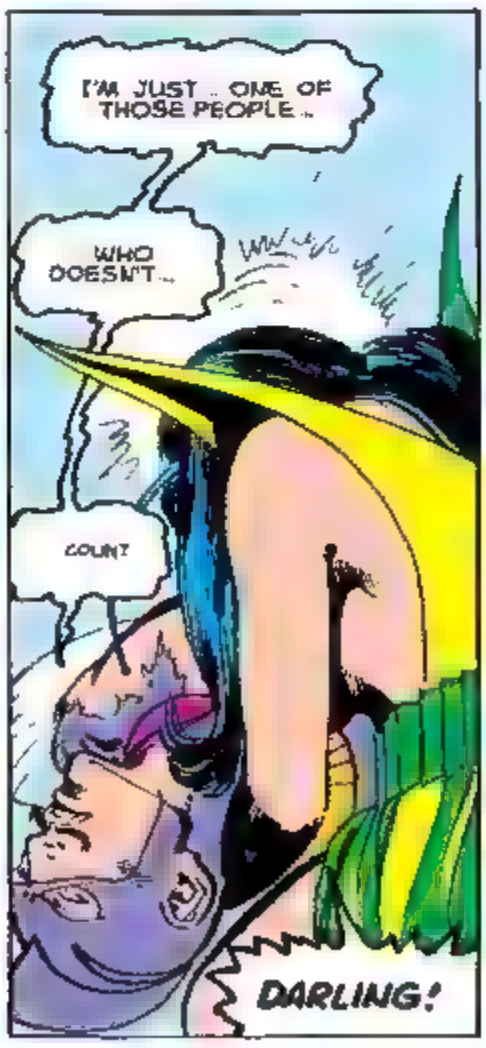

--THE TIME SPHERE PURRS INTO PULSATING LIFE --
--AND THE TIME-LORDS ARE GONE WITH A SPLIT-SECOND BREEZE!

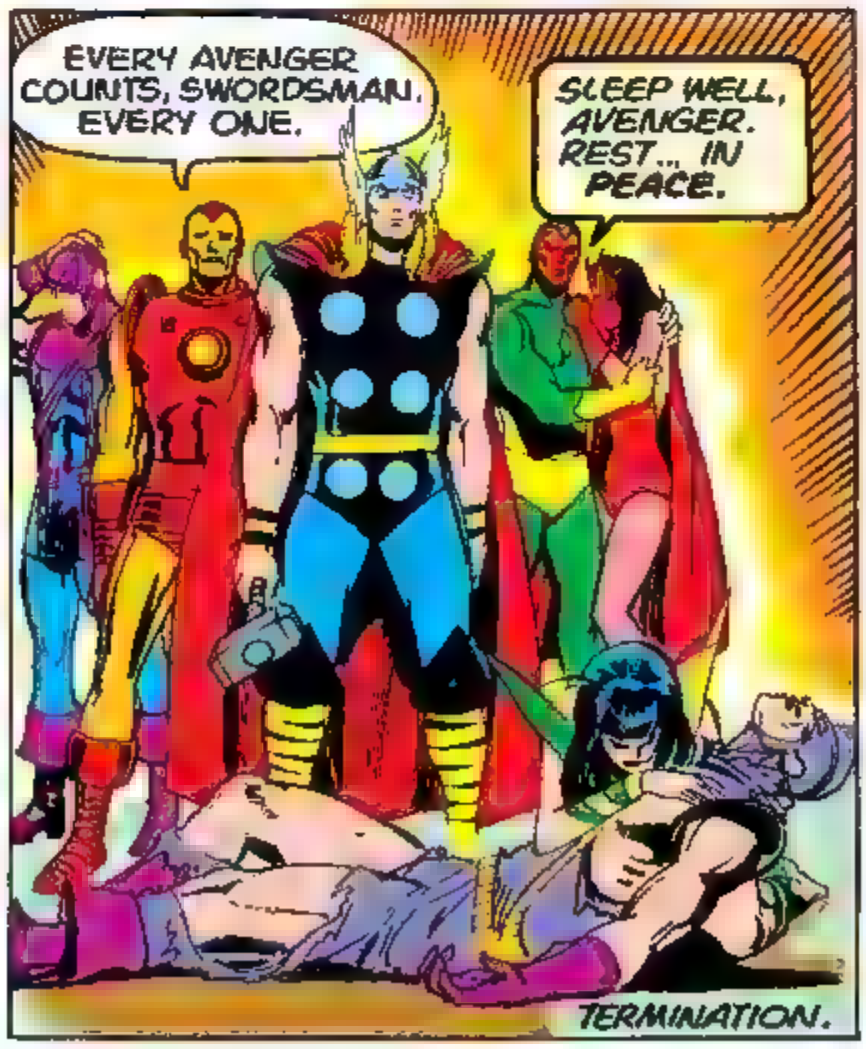
VANISHED! KANG'S THREAT BE ENDED!
FOR NOW, THUNDER GOD. REMEMBER, KANG HAS TO SURVIVE IT, TO BECOME RAMA-TUT!
BUT THE HECK WITH ALL THAT NOW!


MANTIS HAS BEEN THOUGHT MANY THINGS: A MARTIAL ARTS EXPERT, A DEVOTED LOVER, A FAITHLESS LOVER, AND NOW EVEN A MADONNA. BUT AT THIS TIME AND IN THIS PLACE, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT AT ALL--
--THAT SHE IS A WOMAN IN AGONY!
DARLING! DARLING!
YOU CANNOT DIE! YOU MUST FIGHT BACK--OVERCOME!
'FRAID... MY BODY'S... NOT AS RECUPERATIVE.... AS YOURS ... MANTIS. THIS IS... IT.

NO, MY LOVE! THIS ONE MUST RIGHT THE WRONGS SHE HAS DONE YOU! SHE WAS YOUNG--PROUD-- AND SHE USED YOU SO BADLY! SHE SEES IT NOW!
WE ARE... ONLY WHAT WE ARE, DARLING...
I TRIED... TO BE WORTHY OF YOU... OF THE AVENGERS...

...BUT... LIKE KANG, I WAS DOOMED FROM THE BEGINNING...
I'M... A FAILURE...


I'M JUST... ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE...
WHO DOESN'T...
COUNT
DARLING!


EVERY AVENGER COUNTS, SWORDSMAN. EVERY ONE.
SLEEP WELL, AVENGER. REST... IN PEACE.
TERMINATION.

AVENGERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS

TM

TITANIUM MAN!

RADIOACTIVE MAN!

THE CRIMSON DYNAMO!

THE SLASHER!

NEW BATTLE ISSUES EVER!!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®**

THE REALITY PROBLEM!

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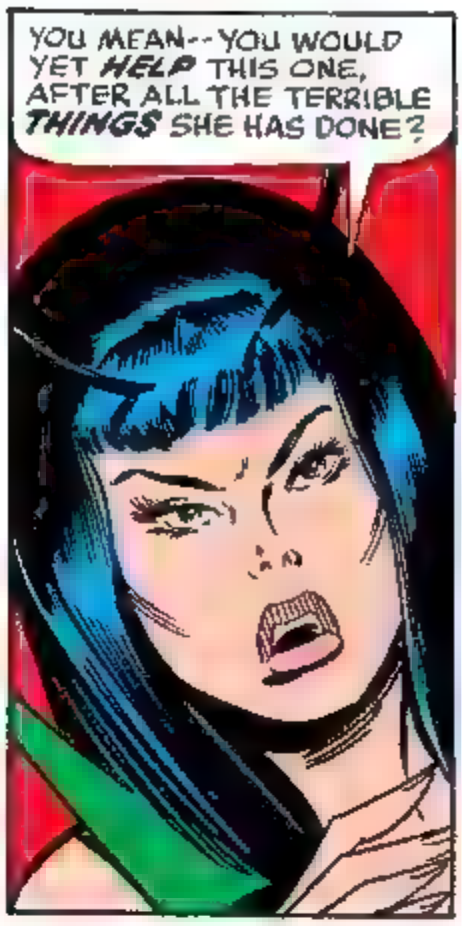
IT BEGAN *YESTERDAY*, FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AFTER THE SWORDSMAN'S DEATH. EXCUSE THE RATHER FORCED *LEVITY*, BUT THE AVENGERS DWELL TOO NEAR DEATH TO LET THEMSELVES *BROOD* ON IT.

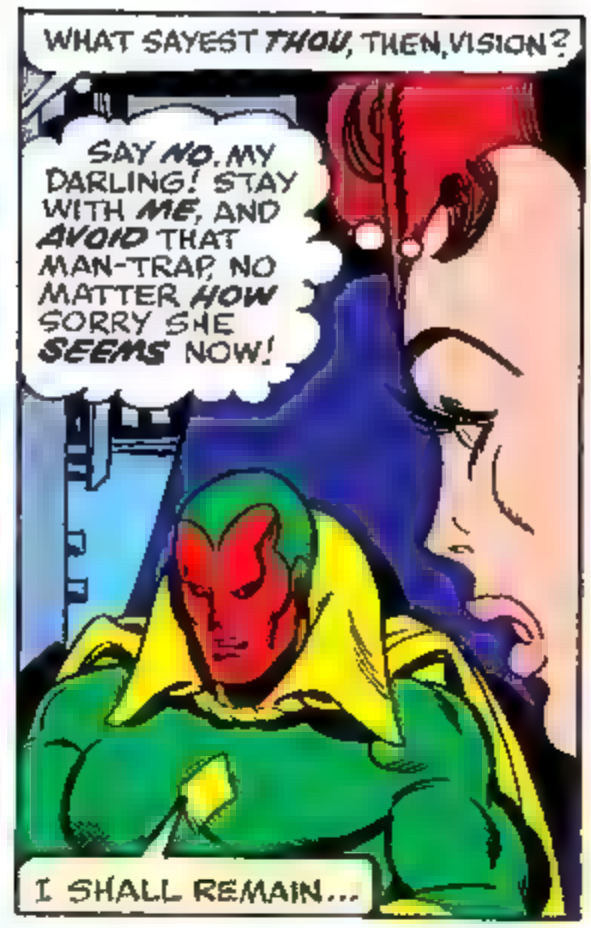
--SO THIS *NOMAD* THE NEWSCASTS MENTIONED IS REALLY *CAP*--AND ALL BECAUSE I GOT ON HIS BACK!*

MARVELOUS, HAWKEYE! 'TIS CERTAIN *WE* DID FAIL TO PERSUADE OUR ABSENT ALLY OF THE FOLLY OF HIS WAYS.**

*CAPTAIN AMERICA & THE FALCON #179.
**CA&F #176--ROY.

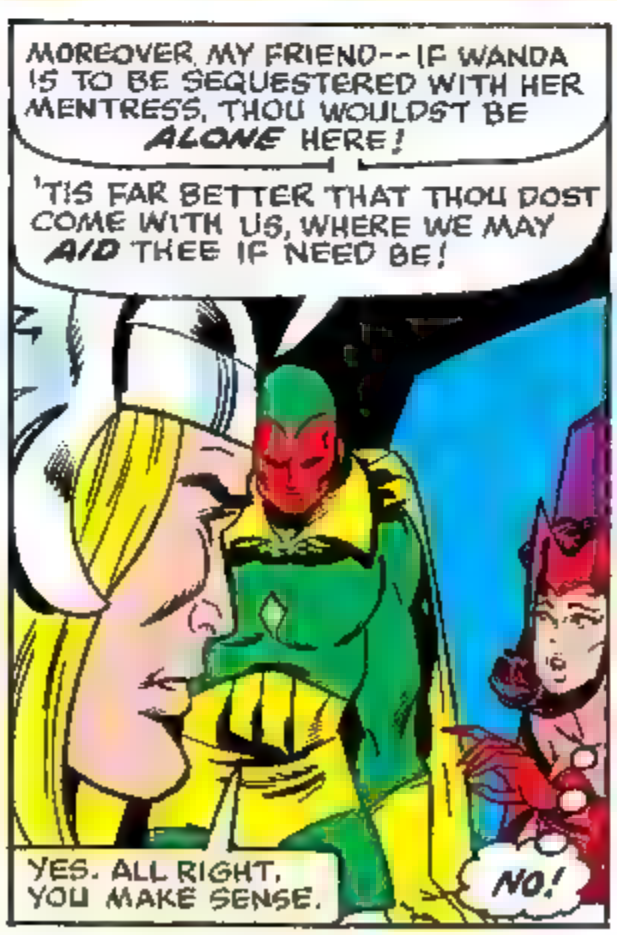

YOU MEAN--YOU WOULD YET HELP THIS ONE, AFTER ALL THE TERRIBLE THINGS SHE HAS DONE?

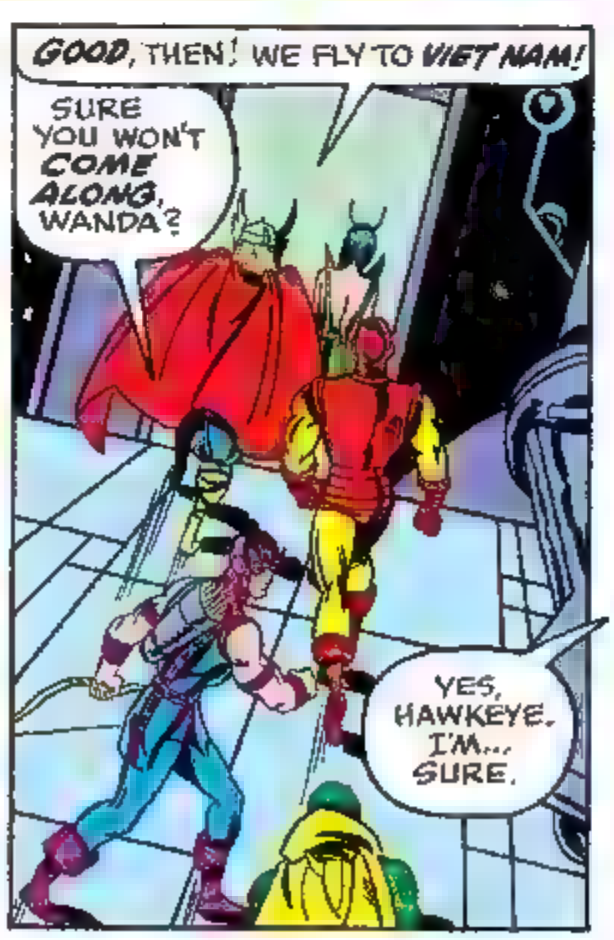
AYE, WE WOULD! THY BEHAVIOR HATH NOT ALWAYS BROUGHT CREDIT TO THYSELF, 'TIS TRUE-- BUT THY CHASTENED DEMEANOR DOTH REFLECT A PENITENT SOUL.
WE SHALL ALL OF US ACCOMPANY HER, EH, WANDA?
I'M--AFRAID I CAN'T, THOR. MISS HARKNESS INSISTS I REMAIN WITH HER, TO PURSUE MY STUDIES IN WITCHCRAFT.


WHAT SAYEST THOU, THEN, VISION?
SAY NO, MY DARLING! STAY WITH ME, AND AVOID THAT MAN-TRAP, NO MATTER HOW SORRY SHE SEEMS NOW!
I SHALL REMAIN...

...FOR I AM NO LONGER A CREDIT TO THE AVENGERS. THREE TIMES NOW-- ONCE AGAINST DORMAMMU, ONCE AGAINST ZODIAC, AND ONCE AGAINST KANG--*
--THREE TIMES HAVE I FROZEN IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE, AND I BELIEVE MY COMPUTER-MIND TO BE GOING INSANE!
*AVENGERS #118, 122, AND GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #2:--ROY.

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ME WITH YOU.
BULL! YOU'RE NO CRAZIER THAN ANYBODY ELSE IN THIS ROOM-- AND ALL EASY JOKES ASIDE, THAT'S NOT VERY MUCH!
WHOEVER HEARD OF AN AVENGER GIVING UP ON SOMETHING BEFORE HE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THE SCORE WAS?


MOREOVER, MY FRIEND--IF WANDA IS TO BE SEQUESTERED WITH HER MENTRESS, THOU WOULDST BE ALONE HERE!
'TIS FAR BETTER THAT THOU DOST COME WITH US, WHERE WE MAY AID THEE IF NEED BE!
YES. ALL RIGHT, YOU MAKE SENSE.
NO!


GOOD, THEN! WE FLY TO VIET NAM!
SURE YOU WON'T COME ALONG, WANDA?
YES, HAWKEYE. I'M... SURE.

THEN COME WITH ME, MY SCARLET WITCH. WE HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF WORK TO DO.

NOW, SINCE THE *BULK* OF THIS STORY WILL BE TAKING PLACE IN WHAT AMERICAN GIS ONCE CALLED "*THE LAND OF THE GREEN LATRINE*"--

--(NOPE, THAT'S *NOT* A RIVAL COMIC BOOK CHARACTER)--

--WHY DON'T WE GET ON *OVER* THERE--

--AND SEE WHAT'S UP AT THE *SAIGON DIAMOND EXCHANGE*?

HOKAY, JOES! NOBODY MOVES OR I'LL DO YA *DIRT*!

THE SLASHER IS HERE FOR ALL YER *GOODIES*!

HE SOUNDS *COMICAL* WITH HIS GI PATOIS--

--BUT A VALIANT GUARD SOON LEARNS THAT BUZZSAW IS NOT FUNNY AT *ALL*!

I SAID *NOBODY* MOVES, JOE--

--AND WHEN A GUY WEARS A SUIT COVERED WITH *RAZOR-SHARP BLADES*, PEOPLE OUGHTTA *LISTEN* TO HIM!

THE *REST* A YOU ARE DOIN' *FINE*!

SECONDS LATER, HE *BURSTS* FROM THE DIAMOND EXCHANGE, UNCARING OF THE TIRED, THE POOR, THE HUDDLED MASSES CROWDING THE GARISH STREET *OUTSIDE*.

SAIGON DIAMOND EXCHANGE

AFTER ALL, PEOPLE CAN *NEVER* BLOCK HIS WAY--

--WITHOUT A LOT OF DAMAGE TO *THEMSELVES*--

--AND SO THE SLASHER HAS PULLED WHAT *SEEMS* TO BE A *PERFECT CRIME*.

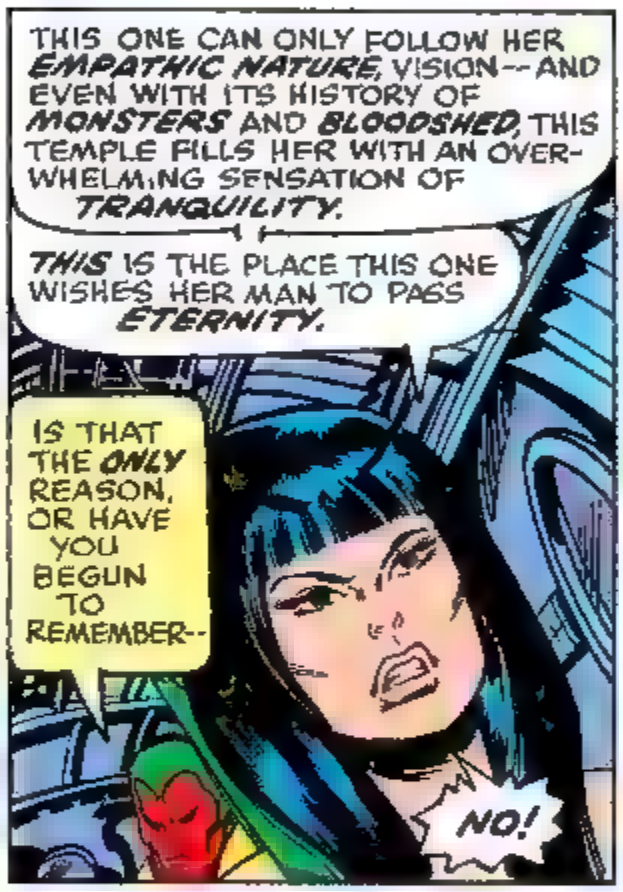
BUT DON'T YOU *WORRY*, MARVELITE. WE'LL SEE THIS PUNK *AGAIN*!

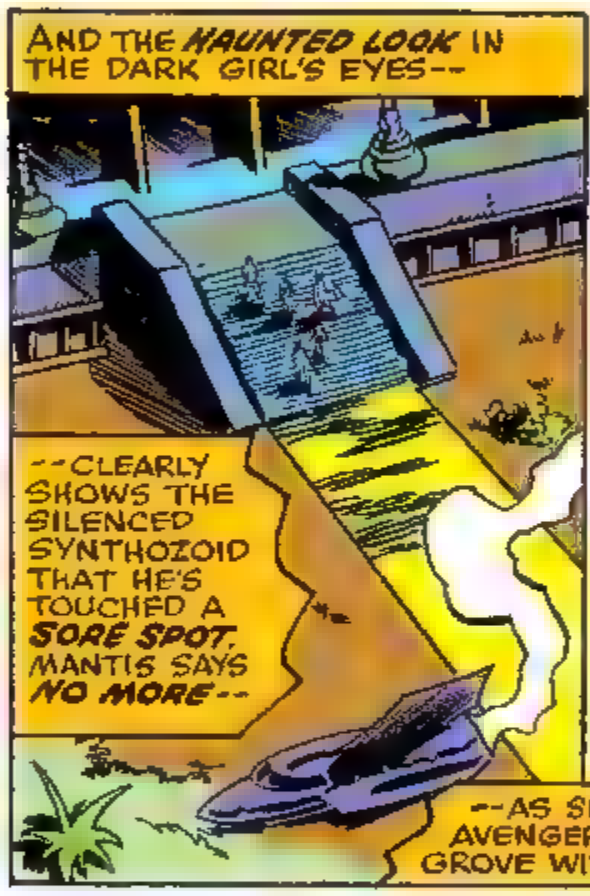
FOR NOW, THOUGH, WE TURN OUR EYES TO THE *NORTH*, WHERE, HOURS LATER, WE FIND THE AVENGERS' QUINJET SLICING DOWN TOWARD--

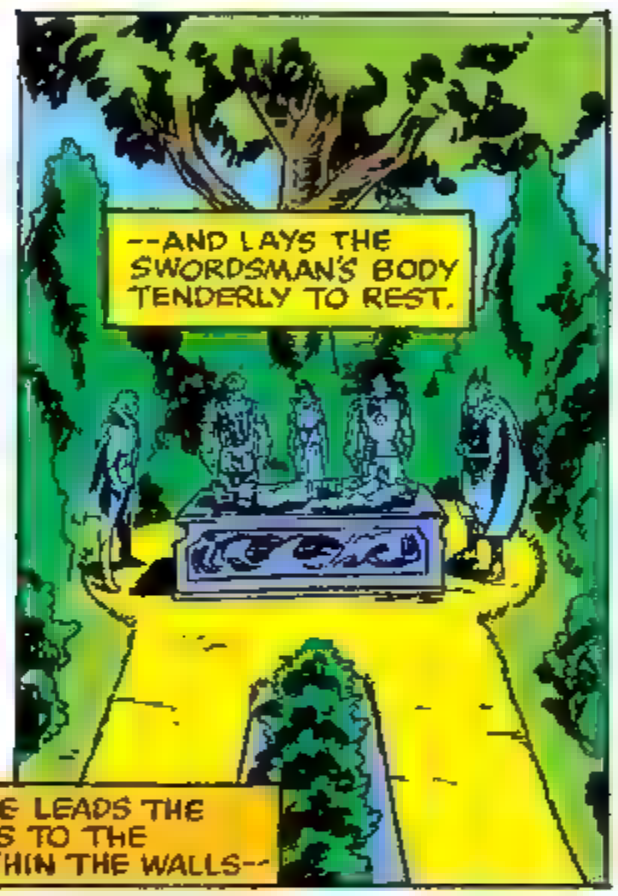
--THE ABANDONED TEMPLE OF THE *PRIESTS OF PAMA*?*

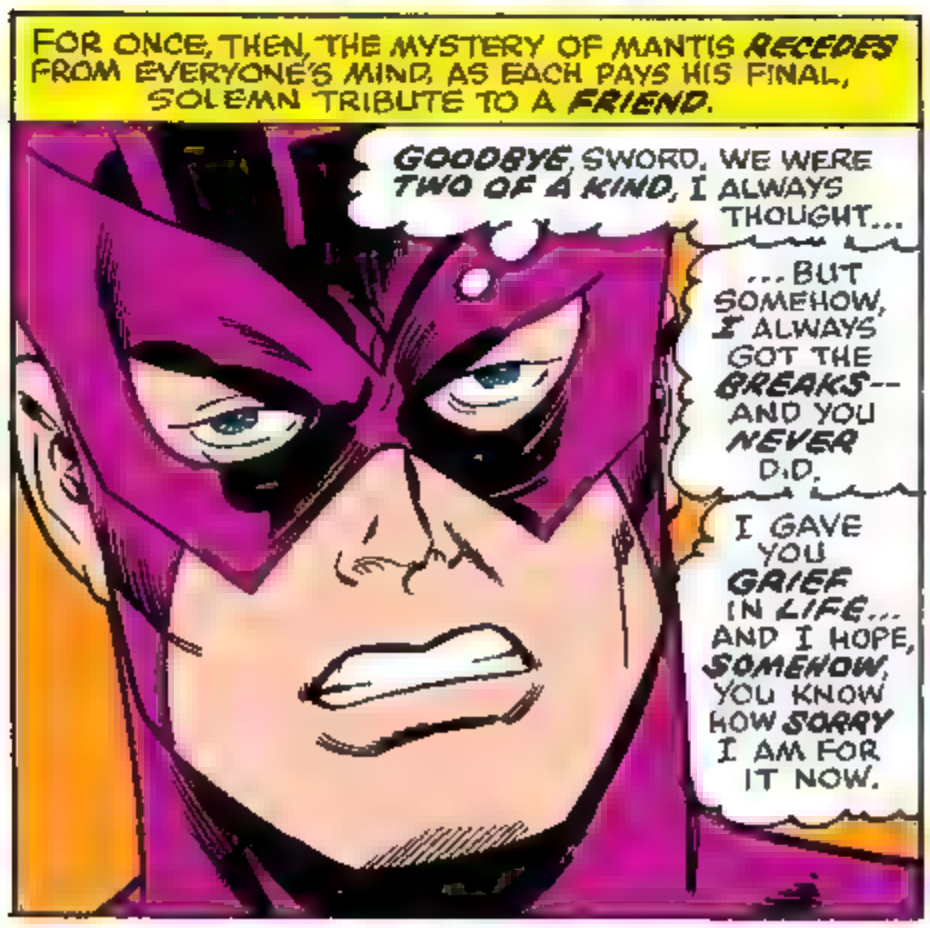
WHY *HERE*, MANTIS?

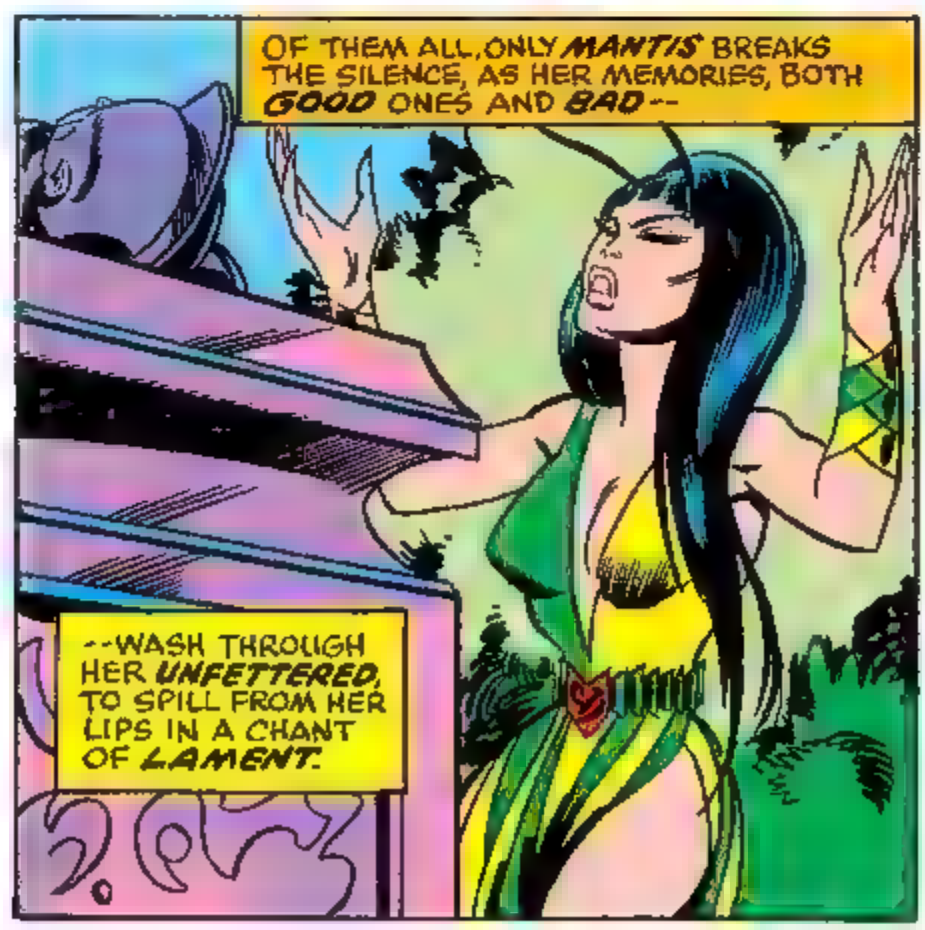
*ALL TRUE MANTIS-LOVERS REMEMBER THE SMALL BAND OF *KREE PACIFISTS* WHO MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE *TRAINED* THE MYSTERIOUS MISS.--R.T.











THEN, SHE TURNS TO *THOR*.

THIS ONE KNOWS NOT HER MAN'S CHOSEN *FAITH*--THOUGH IT WAS NOT *HERS*, OR *YOURS*--

--BUT AS A *GOD*, THOR...

...WOULD YOU *SPEAK* FOR HIM?

ALL FATHER ODIN, WE WHO BE *IMMORTAL* ARE OFTTIMES TEMPTED TO FORGET THE *MEANING* OF *MORTALITY*--

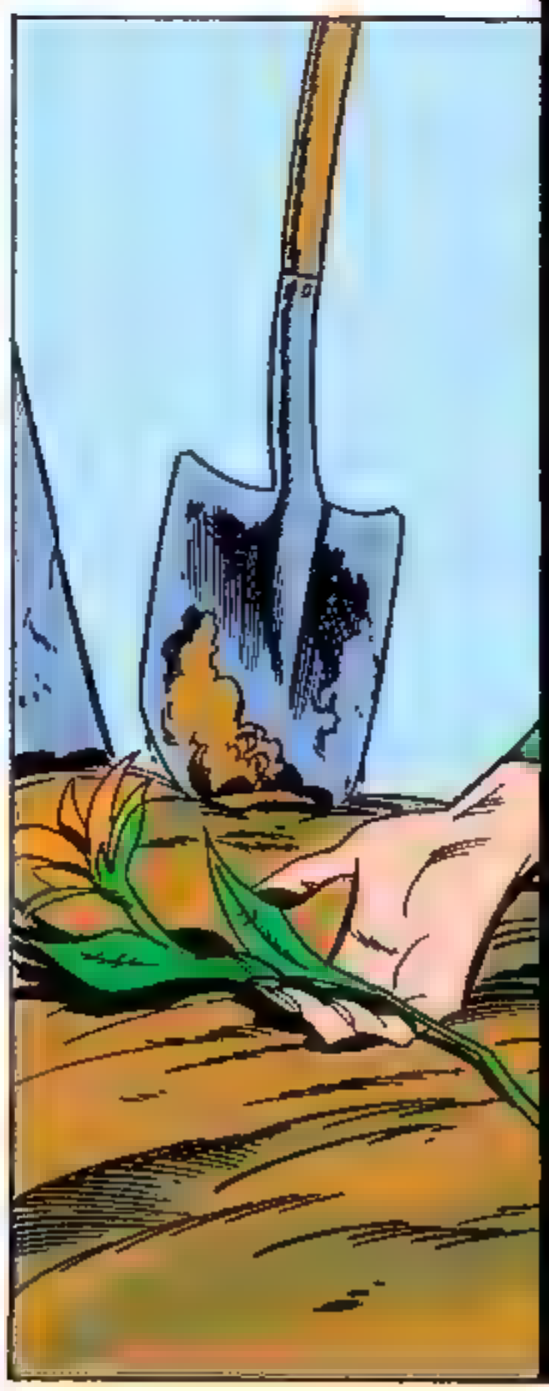
--THAT LIFE IS BUT A *TEMPORARY* GIFT FOR MOST.

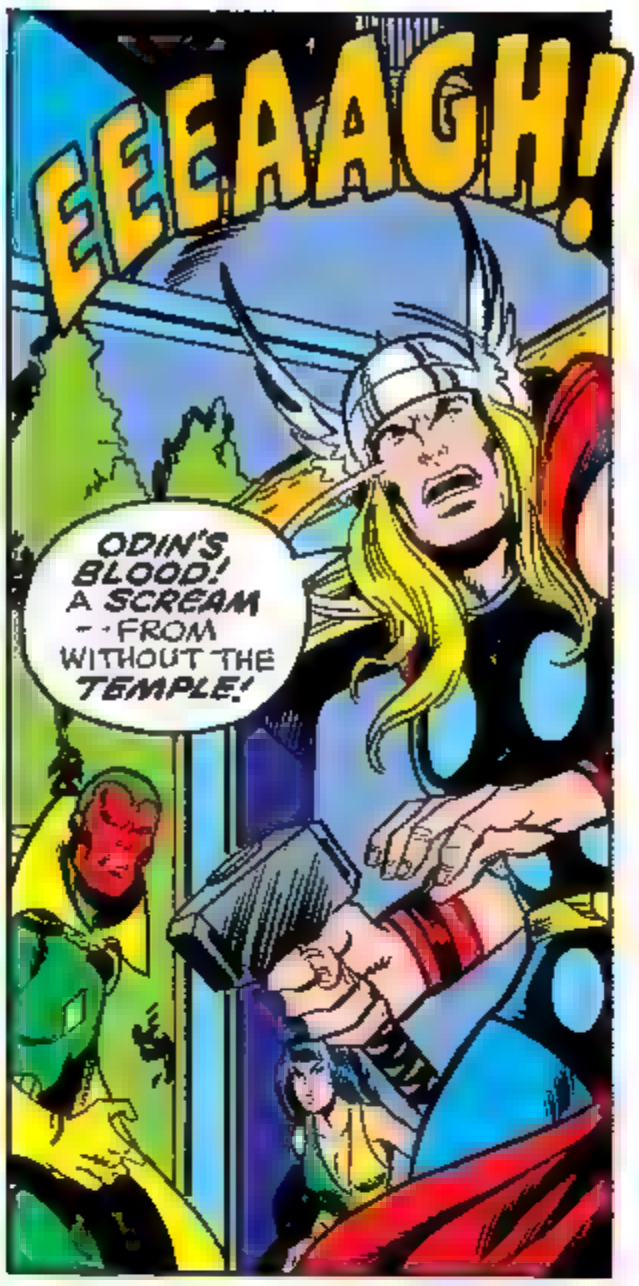
A MAN CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE MAY *FORFEIT* THAT GIFT WHENEVER HE PLACES HIMSELF IN THE PATH OF *PERIL*...

...YET MEN *DO* RISK THEIR LIVES, AND SOMETIMES *LOSE* THEM, FOR MANY AND VARIED *REASONS*...

...AND THE *GREATEST* OF THESE...IS *LOVE*

THEN, AS ONE, *FOUR STRONG MEN* LIFT THEIR FALLEN COMRADE TO *FOUR STRONG SHOULDERS*...AND CONDUCT HIM ON HIS *FINAL JOURNEY*.





--THE TITANIUM MAN--

--THE CRIMSON DYNAMO--

HELP! OH, HELP!

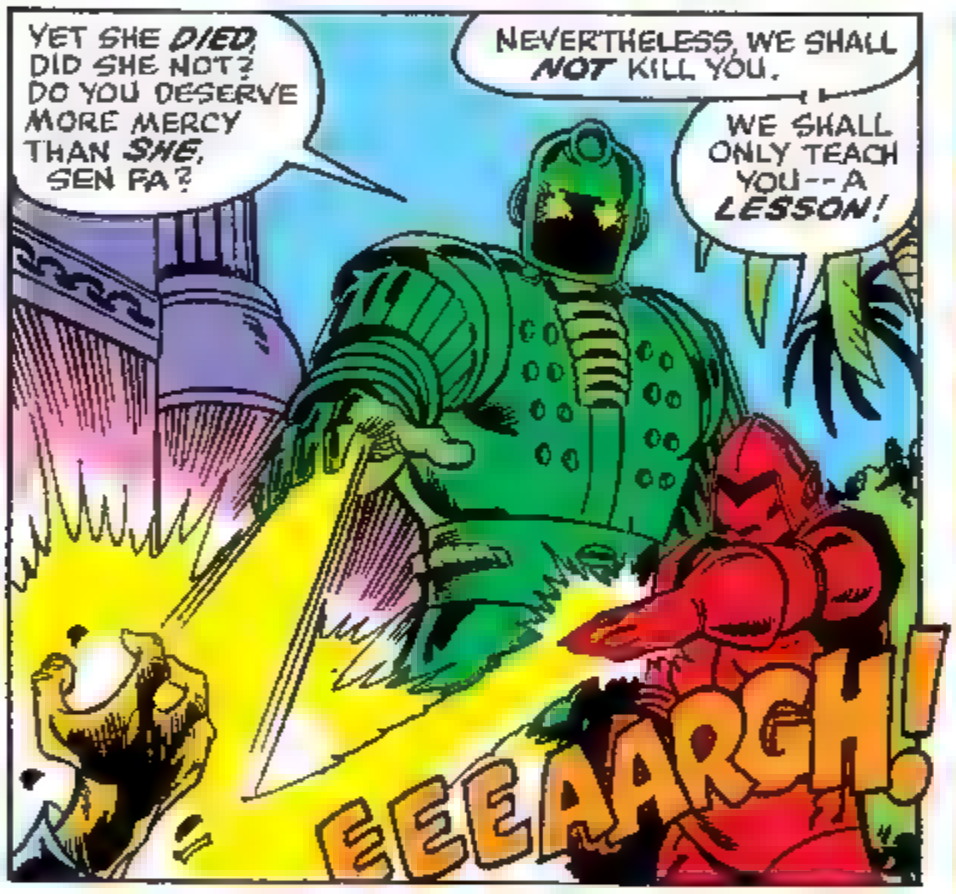
DON'T LET THEM CATCH ME!

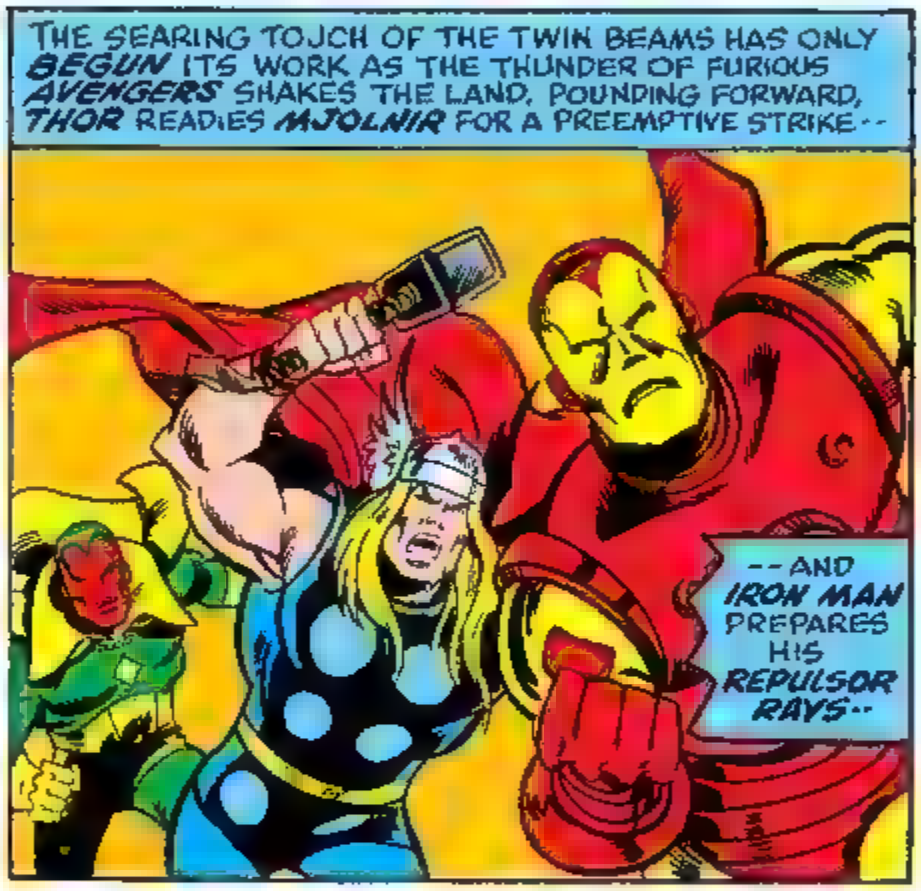
--AND THE RADIOACTIVE MAN!

THOSE MEN--THEY'RE THE FAMOUS AVENGERS! THEY'LL SAVE ME!
IF ONLY I CAN REACH THEM--

DO NOT PERMIT YOUR HOPES TO FLY TOO HIGH, MURDERER!
NO MAN ESCAPES THE JUSTICE OF THE TITANIC THREE!
BLAM!

PLEASE--PLEASE, YOU MUST HAVE MERCY!
I DID NOT MEAN TO STRIKE MY WIFE--!


YET SHE DIED, DID SHE NOT? DO YOU DESERVE MORE MERCY THAN SHE, SEN FA?
NEVERTHELESS, WE SHALL NOT KILL YOU.
WE SHALL ONLY TEACH YOU--A LESSON!
EEEAARGH!

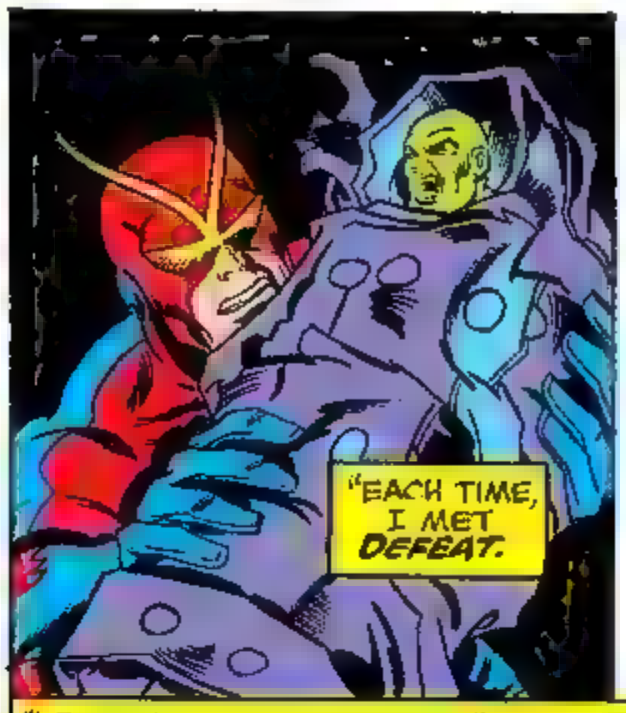

THE SEARING TOJCH OF THE TWIN BEAMS HAS ONLY BEGUN ITS WORK AS THE THUNDER OF FURIOUS AVENGERS SHAKES THE LAND, POUNDING FORWARD, THOR READIES MJOLNIR FOR A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE--
--AND IRON MAN PREPARES HIS REPULSOR RAYS--

--BUT--
HALT, AVENGERS! THIS IS OUR BUSINESS--
--AND YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY HERE!

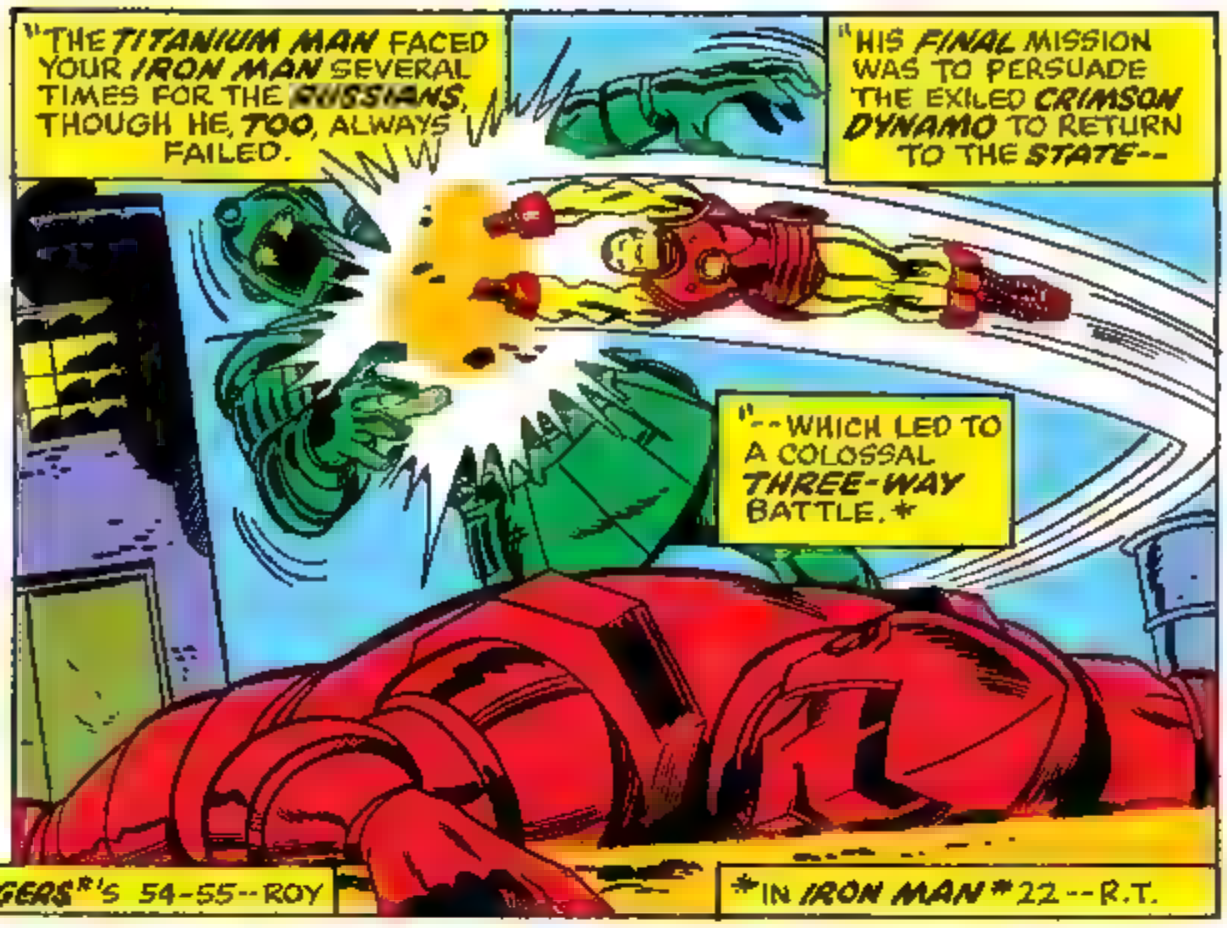
THE SO-CALLED CEASE FIRE WHICH ALLOWED YOU AMERICANS THE NEW SELF-DECEPTION OF AN END TO THE VIETNAMESE WAR GAVE CONTROL OF THIS SECTOR TO THE COMMUNISTS!

YOU AVENGERS MAY STRUT AND PREEN IN THE "FREE" LANDS--BUT WE HOLD THE BALANCE OF POWER HERE!
AND NOTHING--NOTHING COULD BE SWEETER!

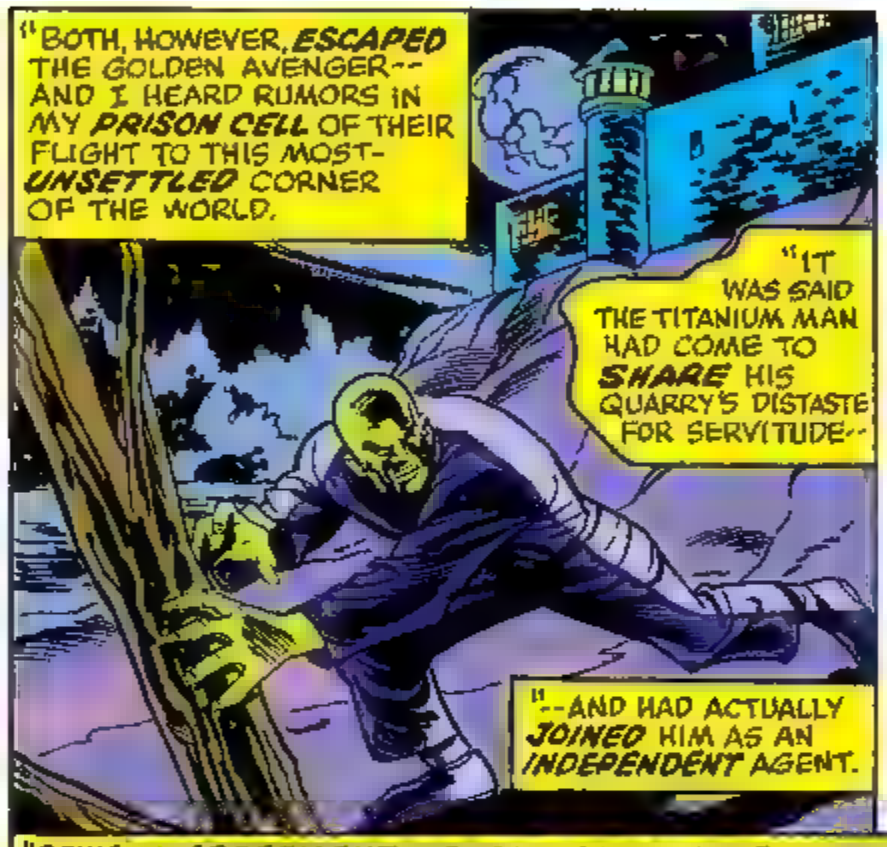
"ONCE, WE *FOUGHT* YOU--I, FOR MY CHINESE *MASTERS*, AND THEN FOR *MYSELF*, AS ONE OF THE *MASTERS OF EVIL*.*

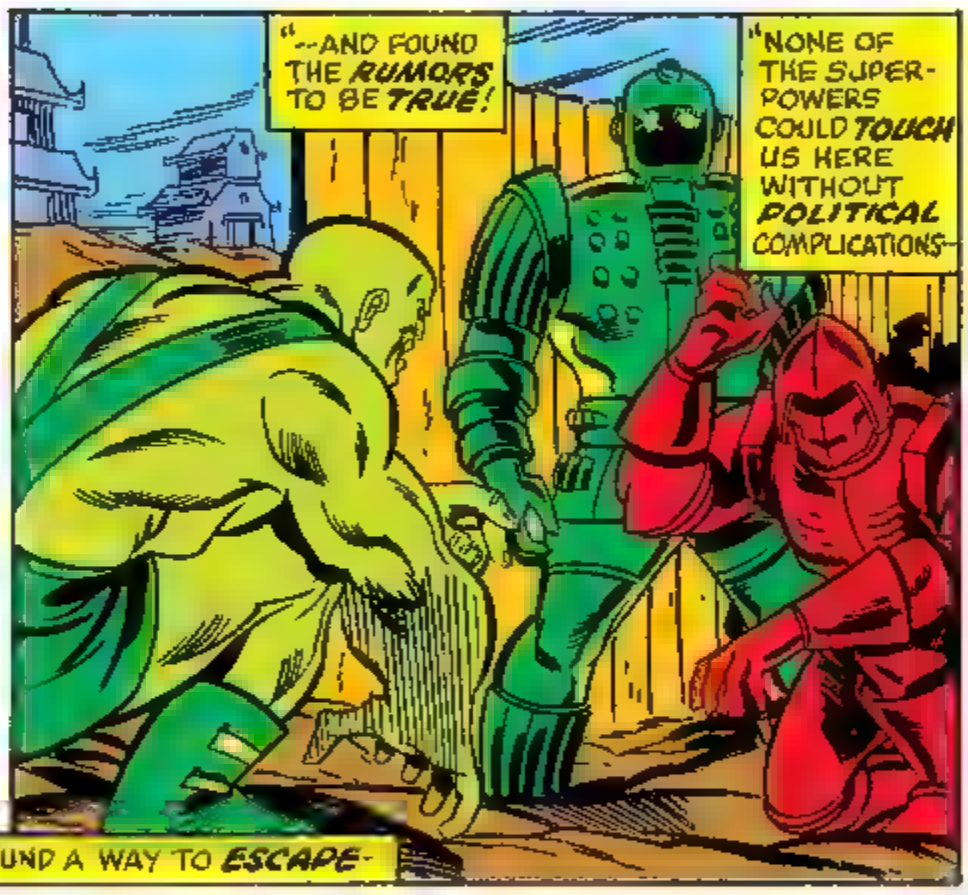


JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY 93--*AVENGERS*'S 54-55--ROY

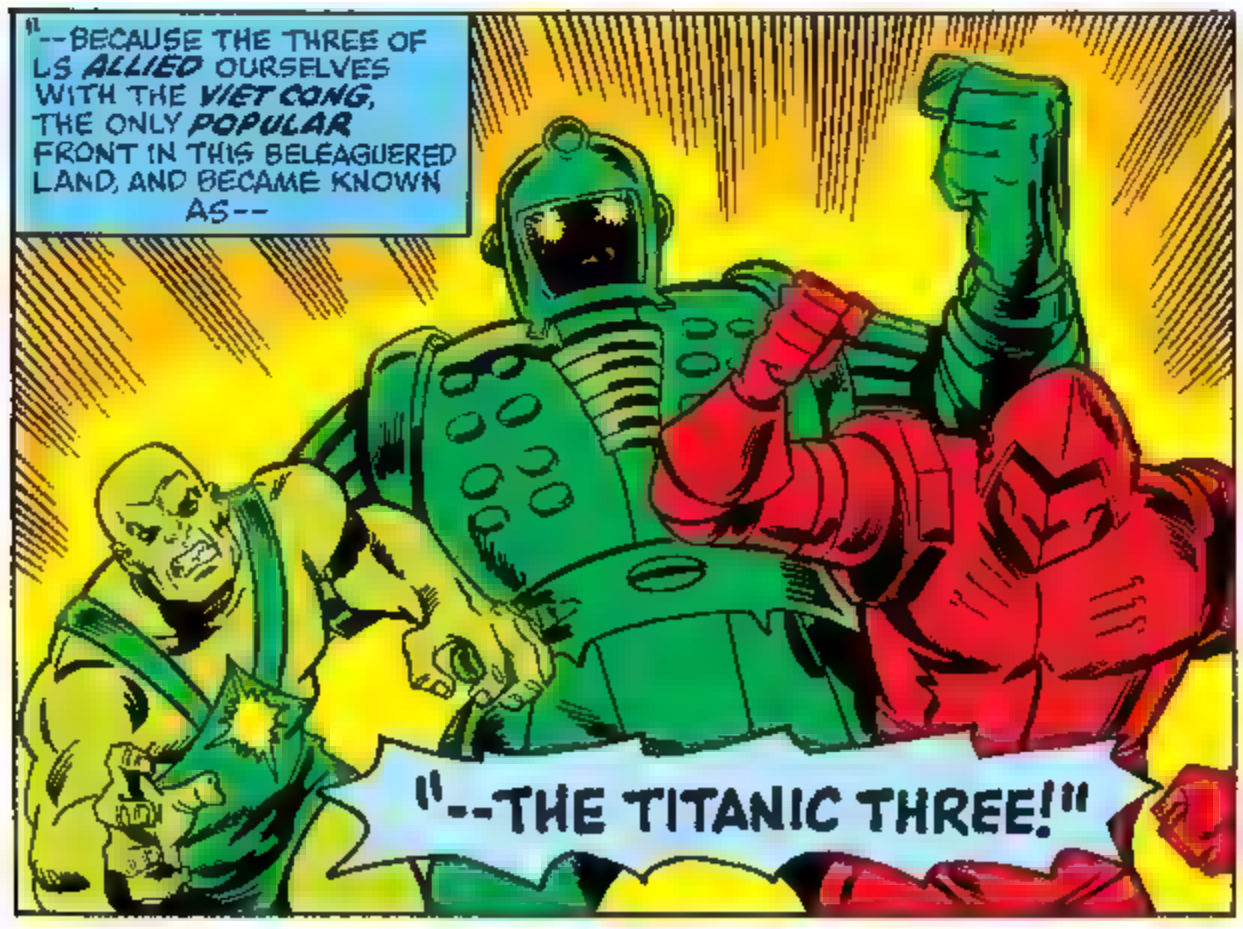


*IN *IRON MAN* 22--R.T.

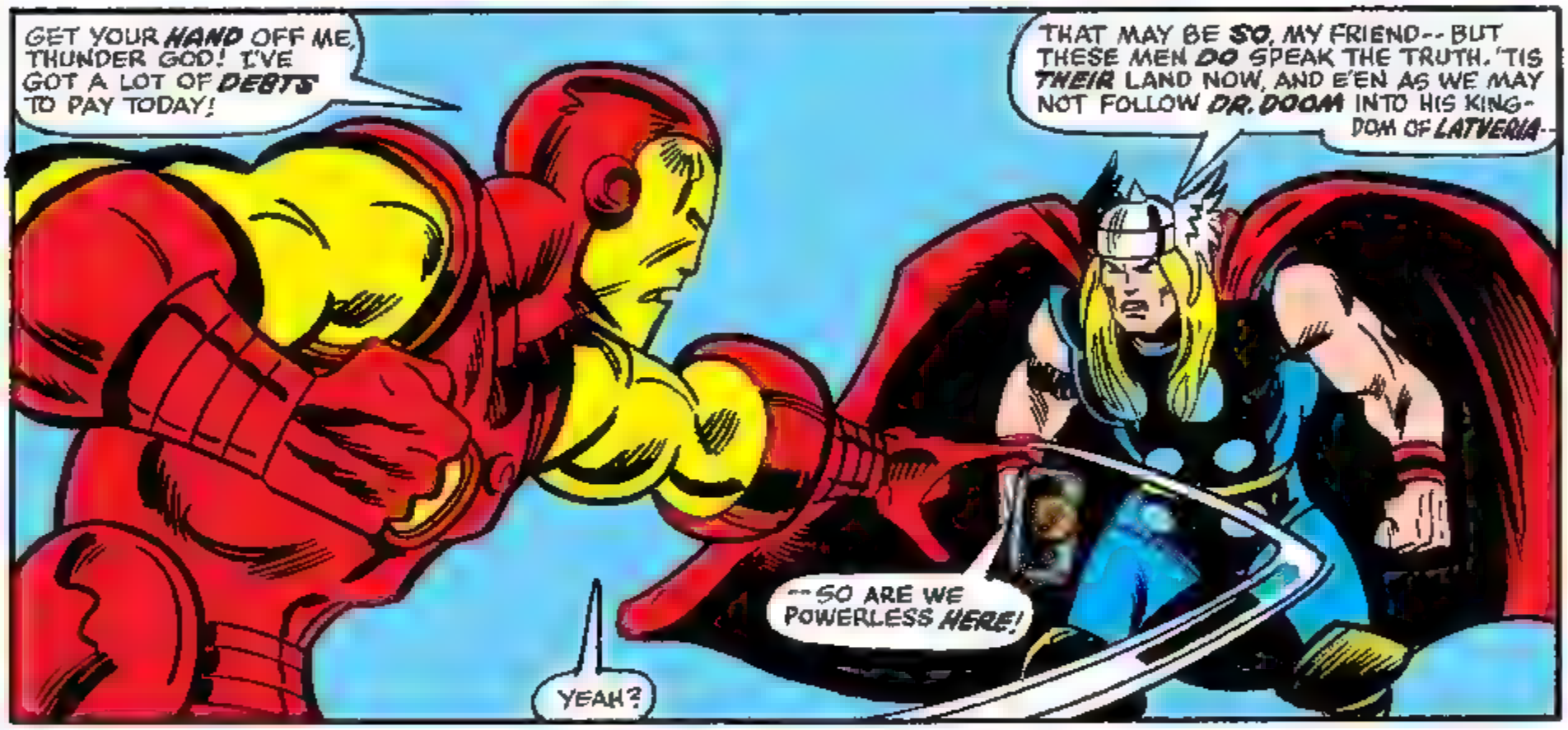


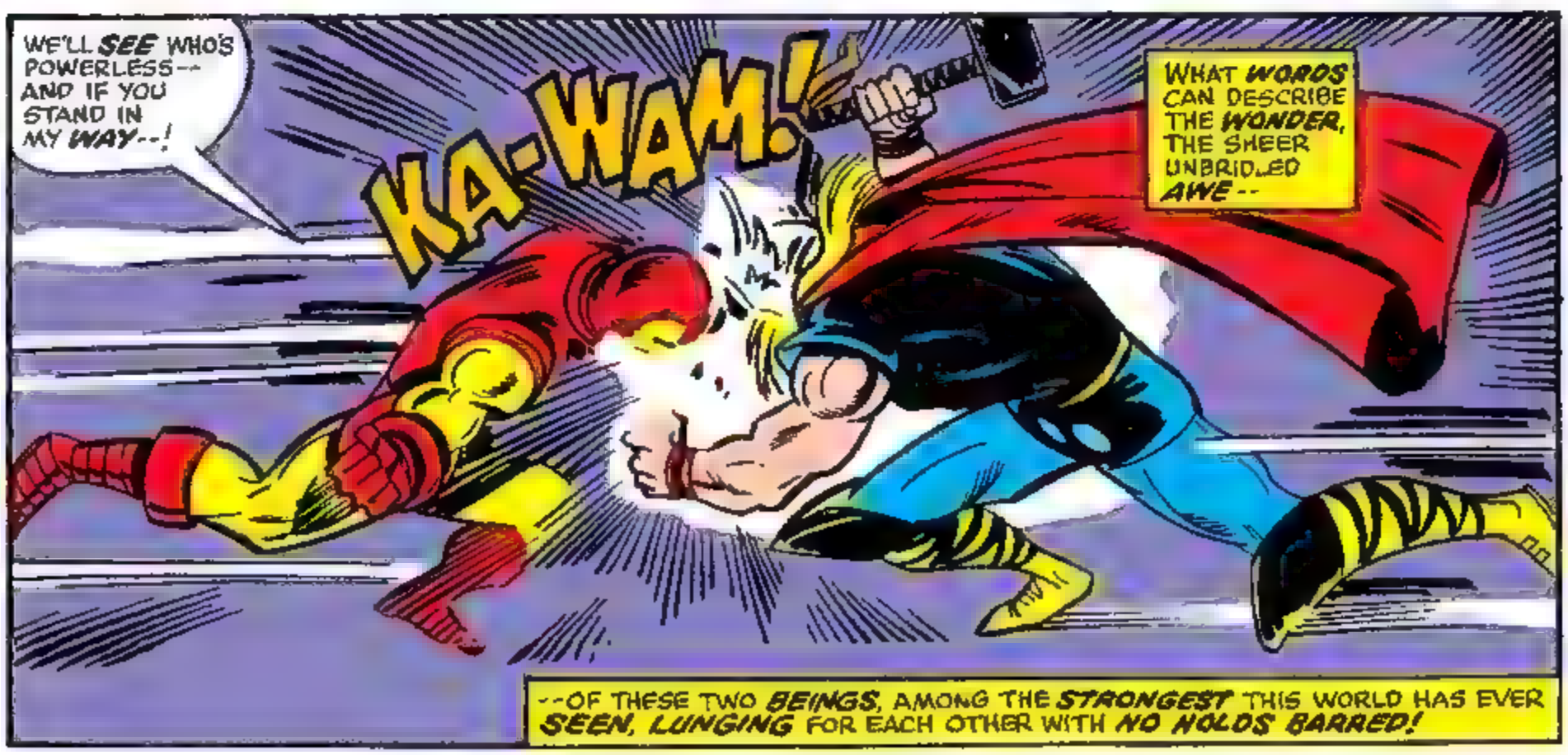


"BEING IN *AGREEMENT* WITH THAT PHILOSOPHY, *I* SOON FOUND A WAY TO *ESCAPE*--



DEPART? AND LEAVE YOU TO YOUR TORTURES? BULL!
YOUR TWO BUDDIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF A WOMAN I LOVED*--AND YOUR VIET CONG IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY BEING SHUT UP IN THIS IRON ARMOR!**
DEPART, MY EYE!
HOLD, AVENGER!
*IM*22 AGAIN
**TALES OF SUSPENSE #39--ROY.


GET YOUR HAND OFF ME, THUNDER GOD! I'VE GOT A LOT OF DEBTS TO PAY TODAY!
THAT MAY BE SO, MY FRIEND-- BUT THESE MEN DO SPEAK THE TRUTH. 'TIS THEIR LAND NOW, AND E'EN AS WE MAY NOT FOLLOW DR. DOOM INTO HIS KINGDOM OF LATVERIA--
--SO ARE WE POWERLESS HERE!
YEAH?


WE'LL SEE WHO'S POWERLESS-- AND IF YOU STAND IN MY WAY--!
KA-WAM!
WHAT WORDS CAN DESCRIBE THE WONDER, THE SHEER UNBRIDLED AWE--
--OF THESE TWO BEINGS, AMONG THE STRONGEST THIS WORLD HAS EVER SEEN, LUNGING FOR EACH OTHER WITH NO HOLDS BARRED!

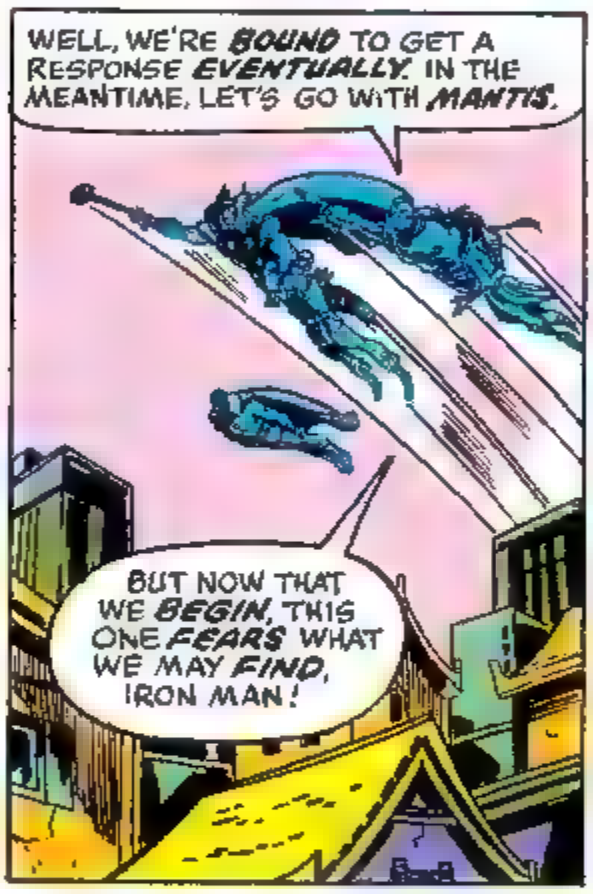
BUT THOR'S FOREMOST FEELING IS THAT OF EMBARRASSMENT, TO BE OBLIGED TO SETTLE THIS DISPUTE IN SO PUBLIC A MANNER--
--SO THAT, WITH NO FURTHER HESITATION, URU HAMMER MEETS GOLDEN ARMOR IN ONE SOUND OBLITERATING BLOW--
CLANG!
--AND THE GOD OF THUNDER PROVES THE STRONGEST OF ALL!

NOW GO--AND DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH OUR AUTHORITY AGAIN!
COME AVENGER. WE BE LAW-ENFORCERS, NOT LAW-BREAKERS.
I... GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, OLD FRIEND.
BUT THERE'LL BE ANOTHER TIME--ANOTHER PLACE!

THEY DO NOT KNOW THAT WE BURIED THE SWORDSMAN IN THE TEMPLE--BUT IF WE EVER WISH TO ENTER THIS AREA AGAIN--!
AH, WHO'D WANT TO COME BACK, ANYWAY? SWORD'S DEAD, SO HE WON'T CARE!
LET US TRAVEL, THEN, TO MORE FRIENDLY TERRITORY--

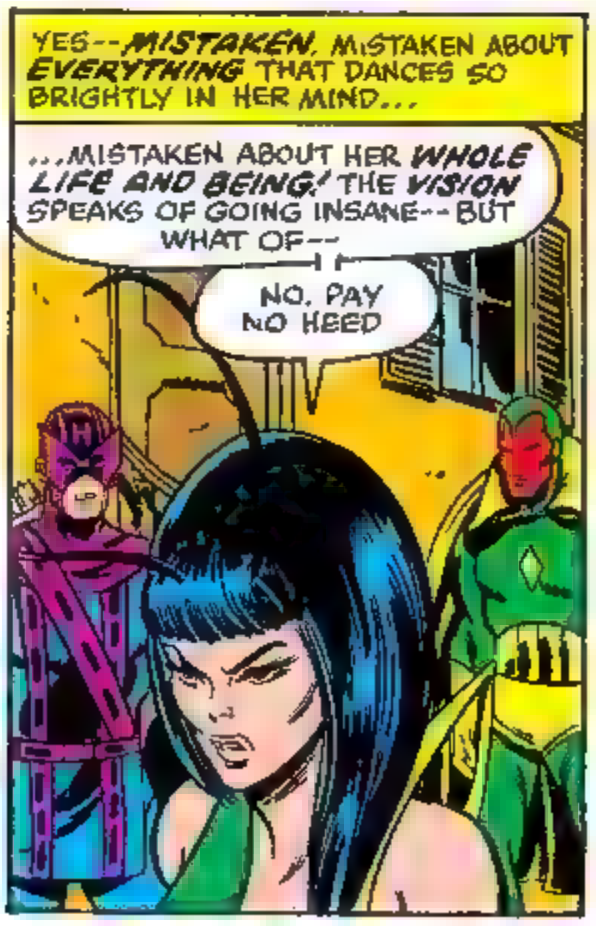
SAIGON!
NOW, THIS ONE MUST TURN TO THE SECOND REASON FOR HER VISIT HERE: THE INVESTIGATION OF HER PAST.
I HAVE A SUGGESTION, MANTIS SINCE YOU MAY BE INVOLVED WITH THE KREE, WE SHOULD CONTACT CAPTAIN MARVEL.
GOOD IDEA, VISION!
WHO SAYS YOU'RE MALFUNCTIONING?

THUS--
WE'LL BROADCAST A WORLD-WIDE APPEAL FOR THE KREE CAPTAIN--OR FOR RICK JONES, WHICH AMOUNTS TO THE SAME THING.
SAIGON RADIO
BUT NO ANSWER IS FORTHCOMING--AS READERS OF CM'S OWN BOOK CAN UNDERSTAND.


WELL, WE'RE BOUND TO GET A RESPONSE EVENTUALLY. IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S GO WITH MANTIS.
BUT NOW THAT WE BEGIN, THIS ONE FEARS WHAT WE MAY FIND, IRON MAN!

IF, DESPITE HER CLEAR MEMORIES OF A CHILDHOOD IN SAIGON, SHE CANNOT SUBSTANTIATE THOSE MEMORIES--
WAIT! BELOW--THIS ONE RECOGNIZES A DWELLING!

THEY LAND, AND THE GIRL EAGERLY BOUNDS TO THE PLACE IN QUESTION. BUT THEN--
I'M SORRY, MISS. YOU COULD NOT HAVE LIVED HERE IN 1961, FOR MY WIFE AND I BUILT THIS HOUSE OURSELVES TWO YEARS AGO.
YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN.


YES--MISTAKEN, MISTAKEN ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT DANCES SO BRIGHTLY IN HER MIND...
...MISTAKEN ABOUT HER WHOLE LIFE AND BEING! THE VISION SPEAKS OF GOING INSANE--BUT WHAT OF--
NO, PAY NO HEED

HEY, VIZK, HAVE PITY ON A GUY WHO CAME IN LATE. JUST WHAT IS THE STORY ON THIS CHICK?
I WISH WE KNEW, HAWKEYE....

"SHE FIRST APPEARED AS THE SWORDSMAN'S... *GIRLFRIEND*. HE LATER TOLD US SHE HAD BEEN AN *ORPHAN*, AND A *BARGIRL* WHO HAD *BEFRIENDED* HIM WHEN HE WAS *DOWN AND OUT* HERE IN VIETNAM.

"AND THEN *LIBRA*, ONE OF THE *ZODIAC* CARTEL, GAVE US A *DIFFERENT* STORY, TO HER *ANGER* AND APPARENT *AMAZEMENT*. *HE* CLAIMED SHE WAS HIS *DAUGHTER* BY A VIETNAMESE WOMAN--

"--WHOSE *GANGSTER BROTHER* HAD TRIED TO *DESTROY* THEM SOME TWENTY YEARS BEFORE. THE *WIFE* HAD BEEN *KILLED*, AND *LIBRA* HAD BEEN *BLINDED*.

"HE FLED WITH HIS INFANT CHILD TO TO THE *TEMPLE* WE VISITED EARLIER--

"--WHERE THE GIRL WAS RECEIVED BY THE PRIESTS WITH *NEAR-WORSHIP*, AND TAUGHT *COMPLETE CONTROL* OF BOTH HER *MIND* AND *BODY*.

"SOON AFTER, A SPACE-CREATURE CALLED THE *STAR-STALKER* PROCLAIMED THESE PRIESTS TO BE *PACIFIST KREE*--

"--COME TO EARTH *ORIGINALLY* TO GUARD AGAINST *HIM*.

"OBVIOUSLY, ALL THIS WAS *HEARSAY*, FROM OBVIOUSLY *IMPEACHABLE* SOURCES--

"--BUT THREE DAYS AGO, THE *STAR* APPEARED ABOVE AVENGERS MANSION--

"--AND *KANG* SAID IT MARKED MANTIS'S *READINESS* TO BECOME SOMETHING CALLED THE *CELESTIAL MADONNA*!

"*THAT*, AT LEAST, WAS LATER *SECONDED* BY KANG'S *FUTURE* SELF, *PHARAOH RAMA TUT*."

HOLY TOLEDO, VIZH! THAT'S THE MOST... MOST...

...I DUNNO *WHAT* TO CALL IT!

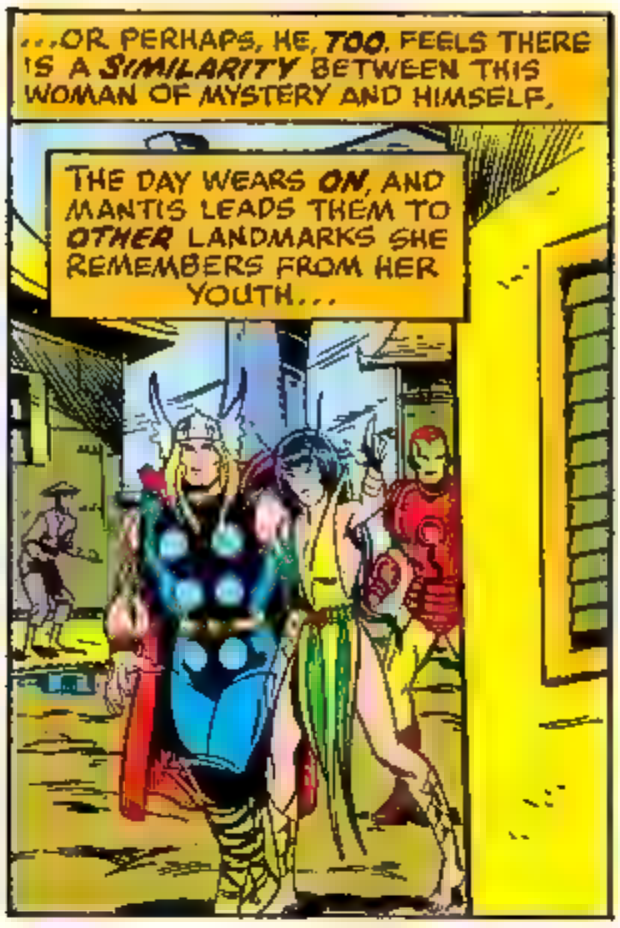
WHAT DOES MANTIS *HERSELF* HAVE TO SAY ABOUT ALL THIS?

HER MEMORIES REMAIN THOSE OF A SIMPLE VIETNAMESE *ORPHAN*--

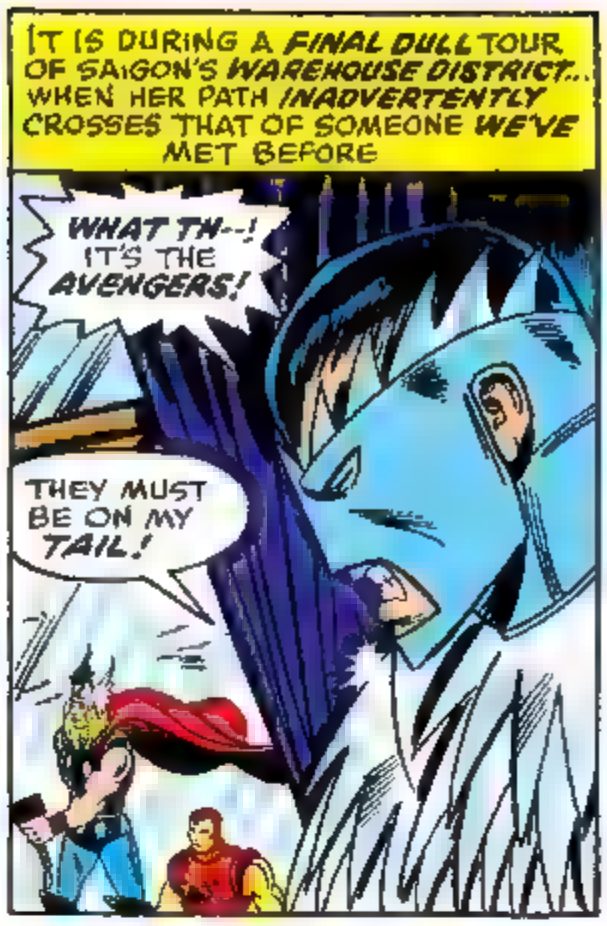
--WHO LIVED *ALL HER LIFE* ON *THESE STREETS*.

THE SYNTHOZOID TURNS *AWAY* THEN, KEEPING TO *HIMSELF* ONE FINAL FACT: MANTIS'S INCREASINGLY AMOROUS *OVERTURES* TOWARD HIM BEFORE THE SWORDSMAN'S SOBERING *DEMISE*.

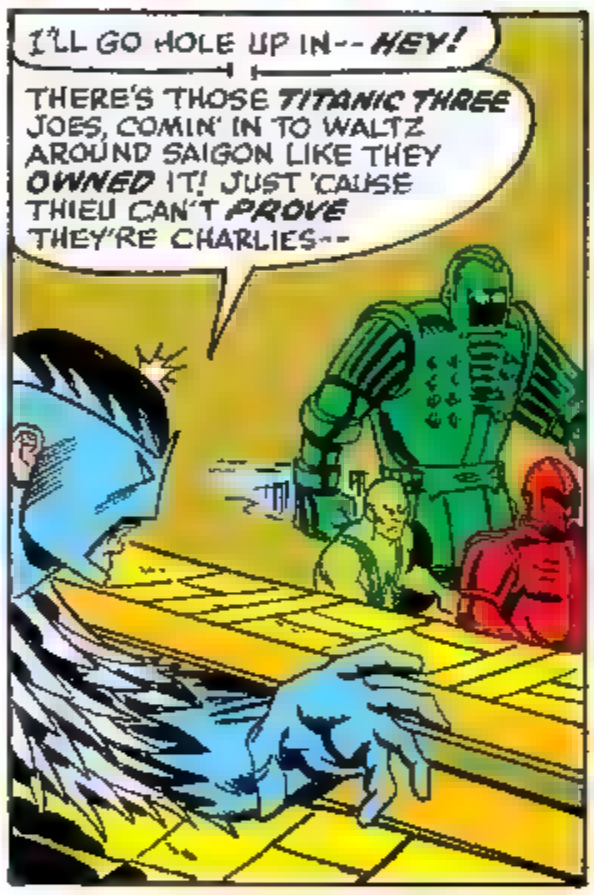
ABOVE ALL ELSE, THE VISION IS A *GENTLEMAN*...


...OR PERHAPS, HE, TOO, FEELS THERE IS A SIMILARITY BETWEEN THIS WOMAN OF MYSTERY AND HIMSELF.
THE DAY WEARS ON, AND MANTIS LEADS THEM TO OTHER LANDMARKS SHE REMEMBERS FROM HER YOUTH...

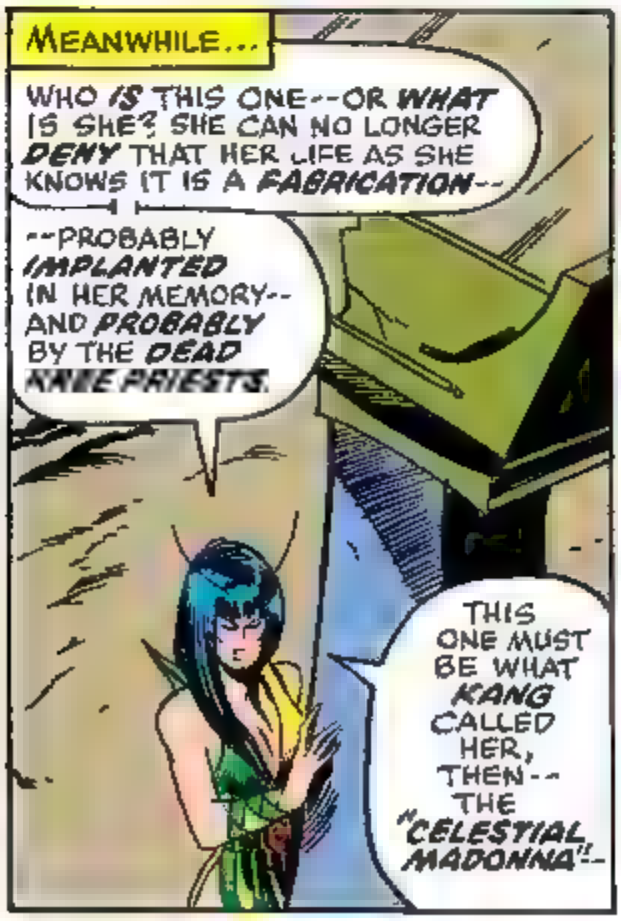
...BUT ALWAYS--ALWAYS--THE INHABITANTS OF THESE PLACES DISAVOW HER--
--AND HER SPIRITS, ONCE SO HIGH, SINK LOWER AND LOWER, TILL SHE SEEMS ANOTHER PERSON--A VERY SAD AND SUPREMELY UNCERTAIN PERSON.

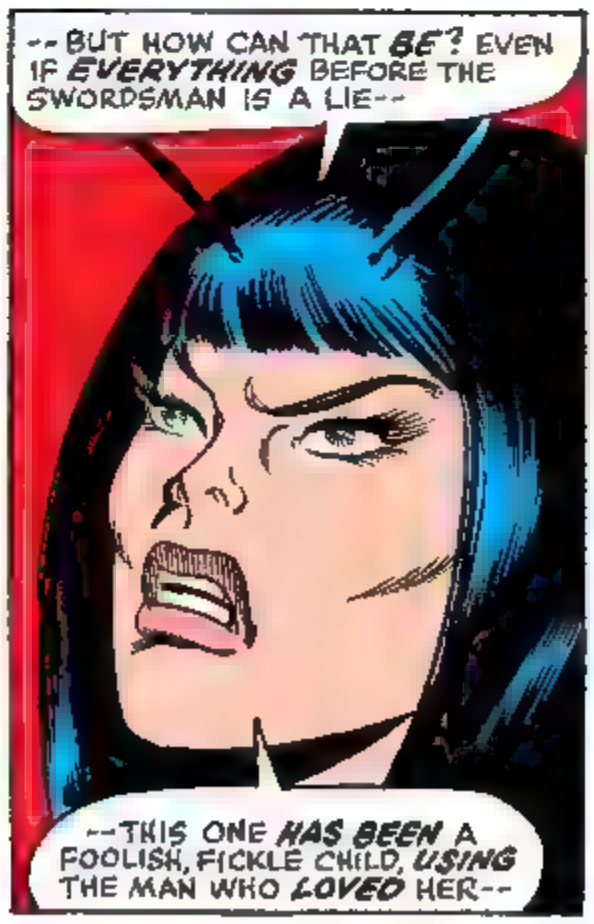

IT IS DURING A FINAL DULL TOUR OF SAIGON'S WAREHOUSE DISTRICT... WHEN HER PATH INADVERTENTLY CROSSES THAT OF SOMEONE WE'VE MET BEFORE
WHAT TH--! IT'S THE AVENGERS!
THEY MUST BE ON MY TAIL!

BUT THEY WON'T HOGTIE THE SLASHER! MY FENCE ARRIVES AT MIDNIGHT--
--SO I'M GONNA STAY WELL OUTTA SIGHT TILL I CAN PALM THE JEWELS OFF ON HIM!

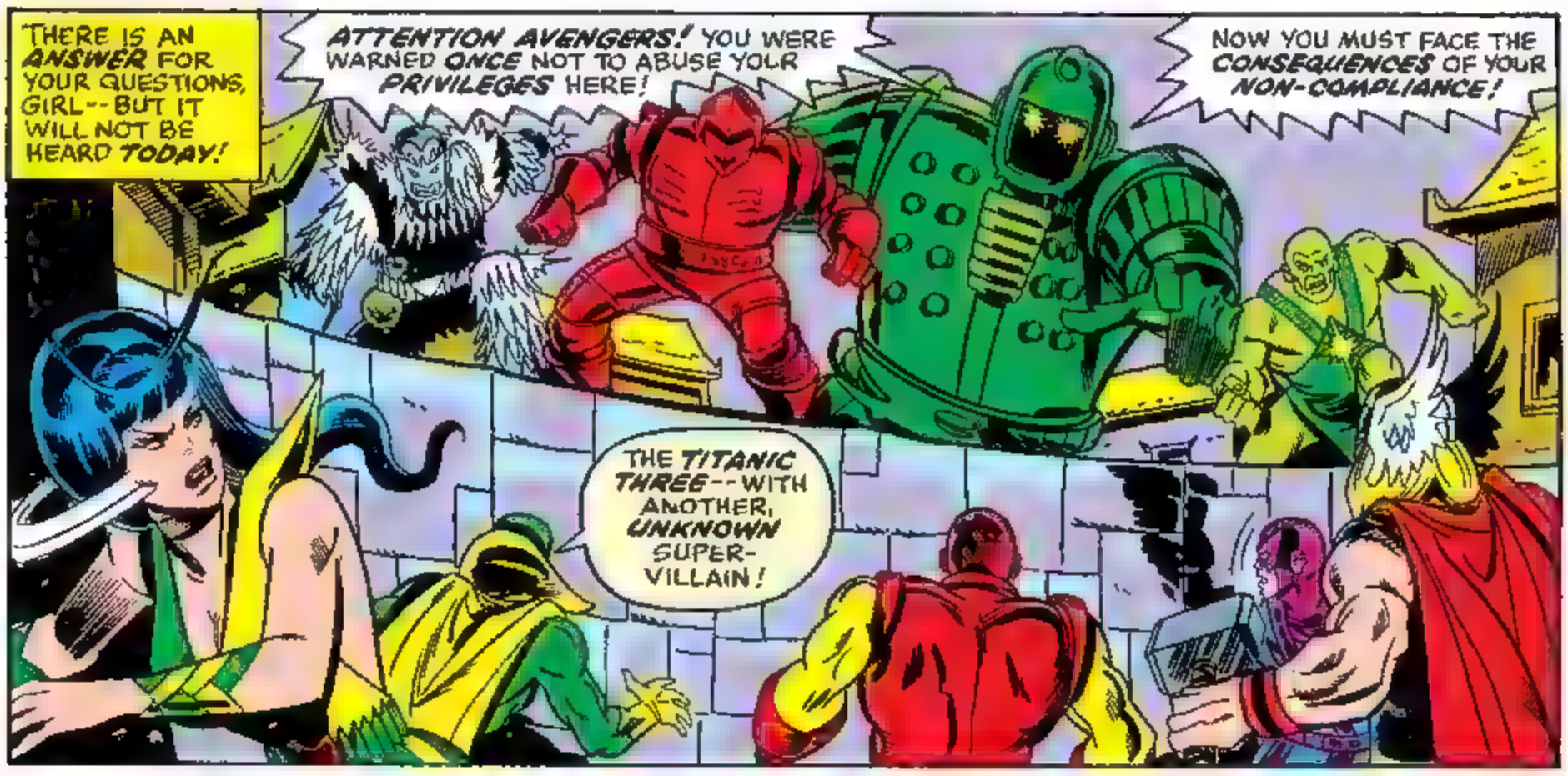

I'LL GO HOLE UP IN--HEY!
THERE'S THOSE TITANIC THREE JOES, COMIN' IN TO WALTZ AROUND SAIGON LIKE THEY OWNED IT! JUST 'CAUSE THIEU CAN'T PROVE THEY'RE CHARLIES--

--AN' THEY CAN BEAT THE TAR OUTTA ANYBODY---
NOW THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA..!!

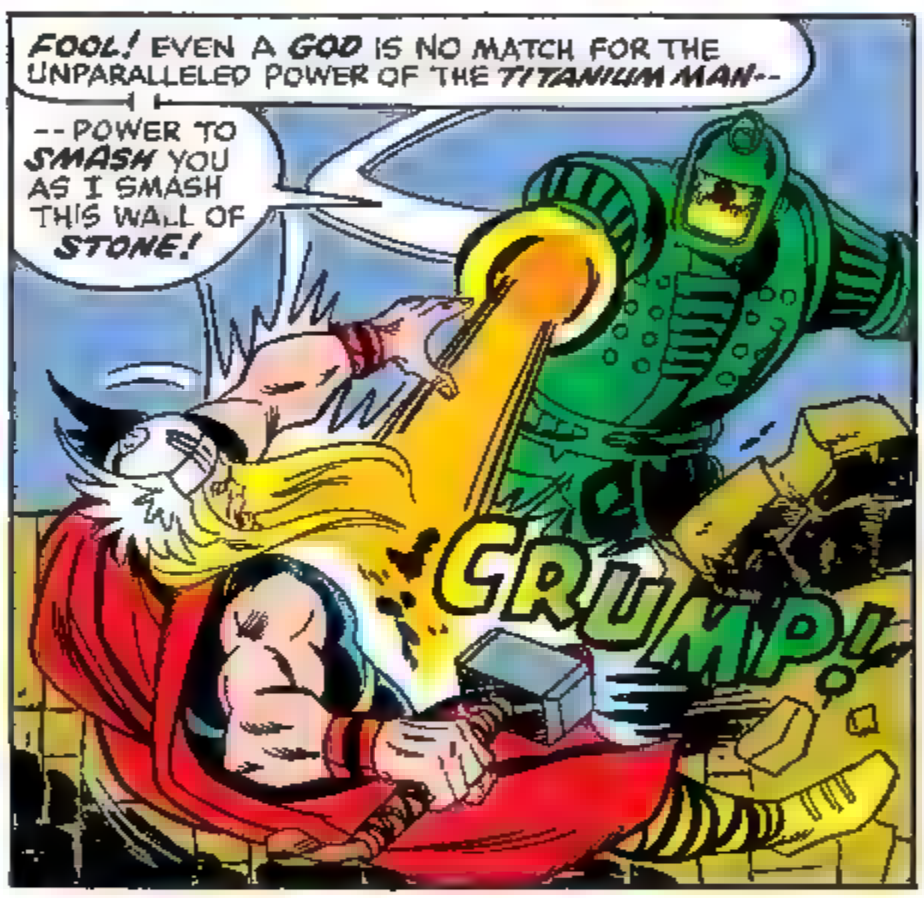

MEANWHILE...
WHO IS THIS ONE--OR WHAT IS SHE? SHE CAN NO LONGER DENY THAT HER LIFE AS SHE KNOWS IT IS A FABRICATION--
--PROBABLY IMPLANTED IN HER MEMORY--AND PROBABLY BY THE DEAD KANG PRIESTS.
THIS ONE MUST BE WHAT KANG CALLED HER, THEN--THE "CELESTIAL MADONNA"!--


--BUT HOW CAN THAT BE? EVEN IF EVERYTHING BEFORE THE SWORDSMAN IS A LIE--
--THIS ONE HAS BEEN A FOOLISH, FICKLE CHILD, USING THE MAN WHO LOVED HER--

--IN ORDER TO CHASE AFTER ANOTHER WOMAN'S MAN! THIS ONE IS NO MADONNA!
YET IF SHE IS... WHO IS TO BE HER MATE?


THERE IS AN ANSWER FOR YOUR QUESTIONS, GIRL--BUT IT WILL NOT BE HEARD TODAY!
ATTENTION AVENGERS! YOU WERE WARNED ONCE NOT TO ABUSE YOUR PRIVILEGES HERE!
NOW YOU MUST FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR NON-COMPLIANCE!
THE TITANIC THREE--WITH ANOTHER, UNKNOWN SUPER-VILLAIN!

WE KNOW NAUGHT OF WHAT THOU DOST SPEAK, TITANIUM MAN--
--BUT IN SAIGON, WE BE NOT OBLIGED TO ACCEPT THINE AGGRESSION!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!


FOOL! EVEN A GOD IS NO MATCH FOR THE UNPARALLELED POWER OF THE TITANIUM MAN--
--POWER TO SMASH YOU AS I SMASH THIS WALL OF STONE!
GRUMP!

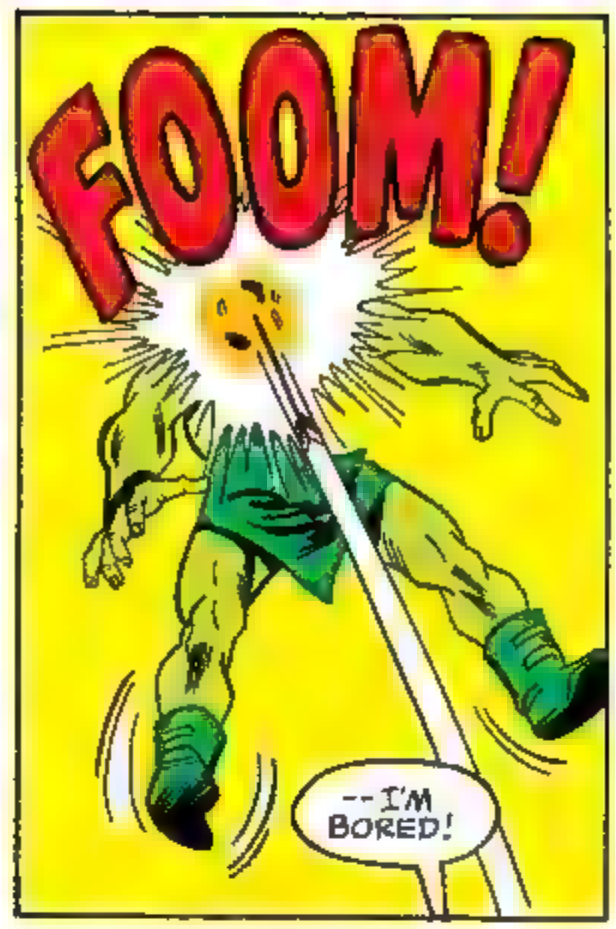
AND YOU, IRON MAN--YOU WHO BLAME ME FOR JANICE CORD'S DEATH TO SPARE YOURSELF--

--NOW YOU SHALL FEEL MY WRATH!
KUNG!

LET US SEE HOW AN AMERICAN SUPER-TEAM FARES AGAINST A COMMUNIST ONE!
LOOK, MAN--

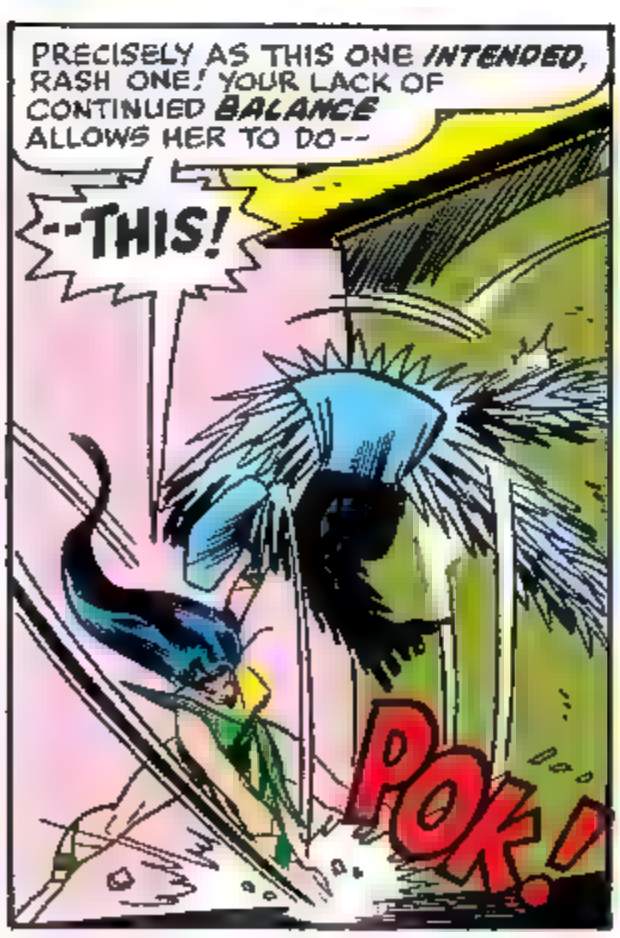
WAM!
--ALL I'VE BEEN HEARIN' IN THE STATES IS POLITICS--

--AN' NOW YOU WANNA BUST MY HEAD WHILE SPOUTIN' YOUR POLITICS! FRANKLY--

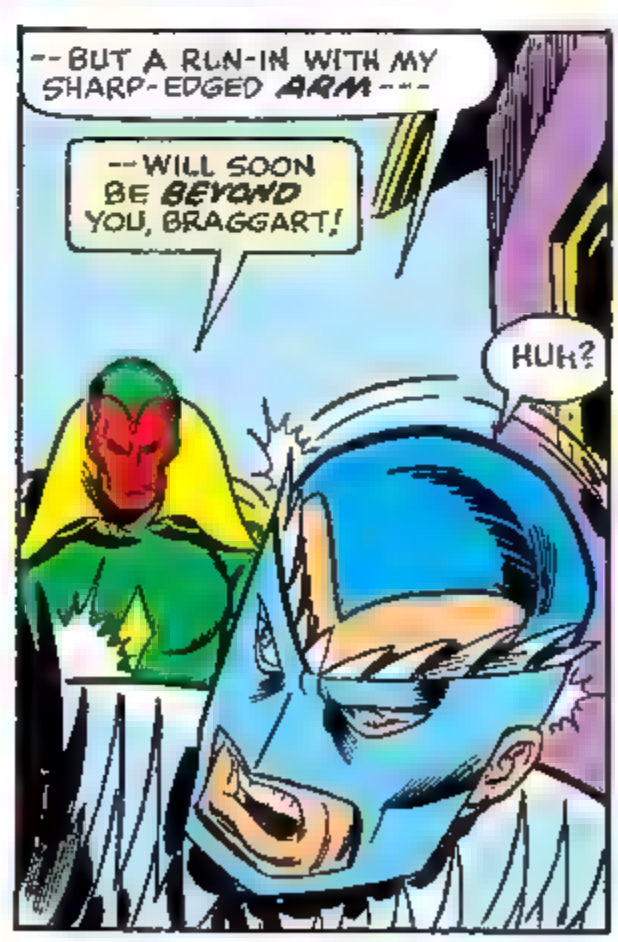

FOOM!
--I'M BORED!

THE ARCHER IS VERY GOOD, LITTLE LADY, SO THE SLASHER'S GONNA BE EXTRA CAREFUL WHEN I SLICE HIM TO RIBBONS--
--RIGHT AFTER I TAKE CARE OF YOU!
NEITHER YOUR COSTUME NOR YOUR SWAGGER IMPRESS THIS ONE, COUNTRYMAN! WHETHER SHE LEARNED SELF-DEFENSE ON THESE STREETS OR NOT--

--MANTIS IS STILL A MISTRESS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS!
BUT YOU LOOK STRUNG OUT TO ME, BABY!
YOU MISSED!

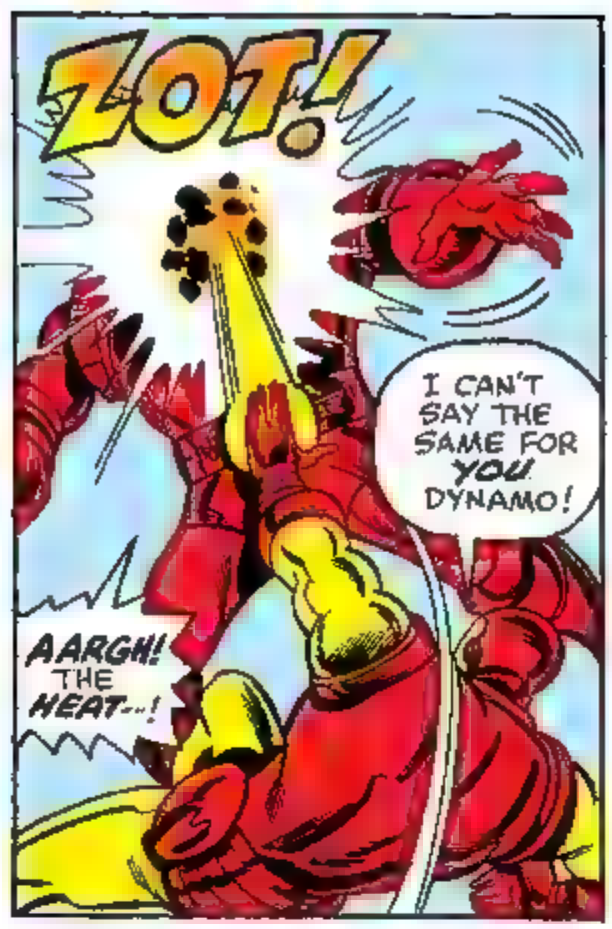

PRECISELY AS THIS ONE INTENDED, RASH ONE! YOUR LACK OF CONTINUED BALANCE ALLOWS HER TO DO--
--THIS!
POK!

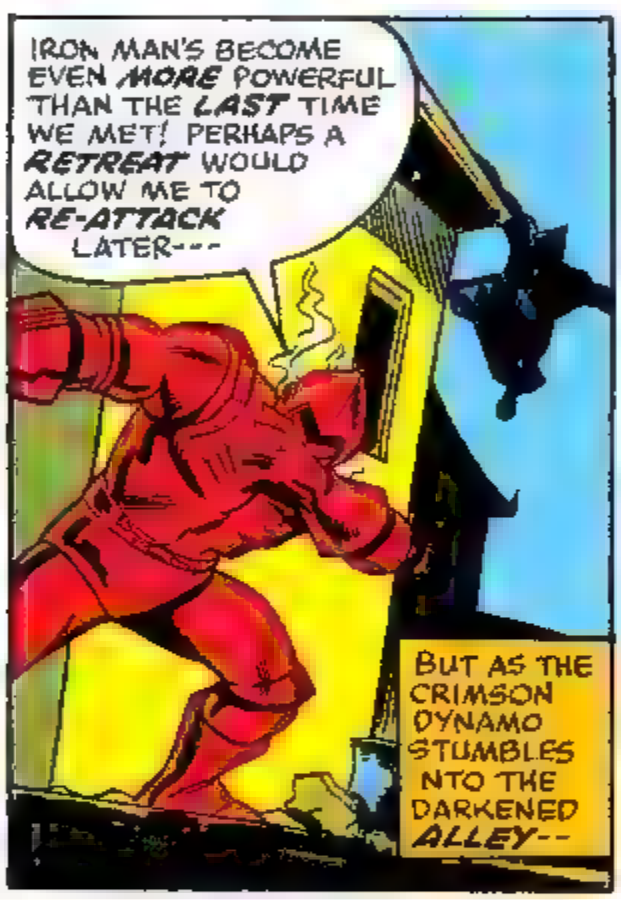
BUT YOU DIDN'T COUNT ON THE WEIGHT OF MY SUIT GIVIN' ME ADDED STABILITY, TOOTSIE!
THIS IS ONLY MY FIST--
BOP!

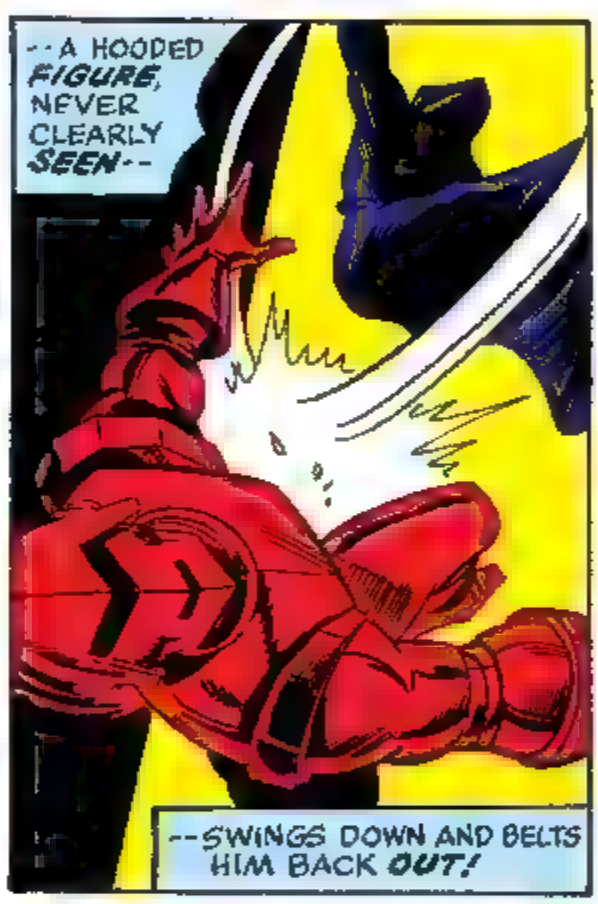

--BUT A RUN-IN WITH MY SHARP-EDGED ARM---
--WILL SOON BE BEYOND YOU, BRAGGART!
HUH?

YOU COULD HAVE BEEN SAFE IN SAIGON, THUNDER GOD!
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE MOLESTED ONE OF OUR VIET CONG SYMPATHIZERS!

THOR IS SAFE WHERE'ER HE MAY GO, VILLAIN!
FWOM!


ZOT!
I CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR YOU, DYNAMO!
AARGH! THE HEAT--!


IRON MAN'S BECOME EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN THE LAST TIME WE MET! PERHAPS A RETREAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO RE-ATTACK LATER---
BUT AS THE CRIMSON DYNAMO STUMBLES NTO THE DARKENED ALLEY--

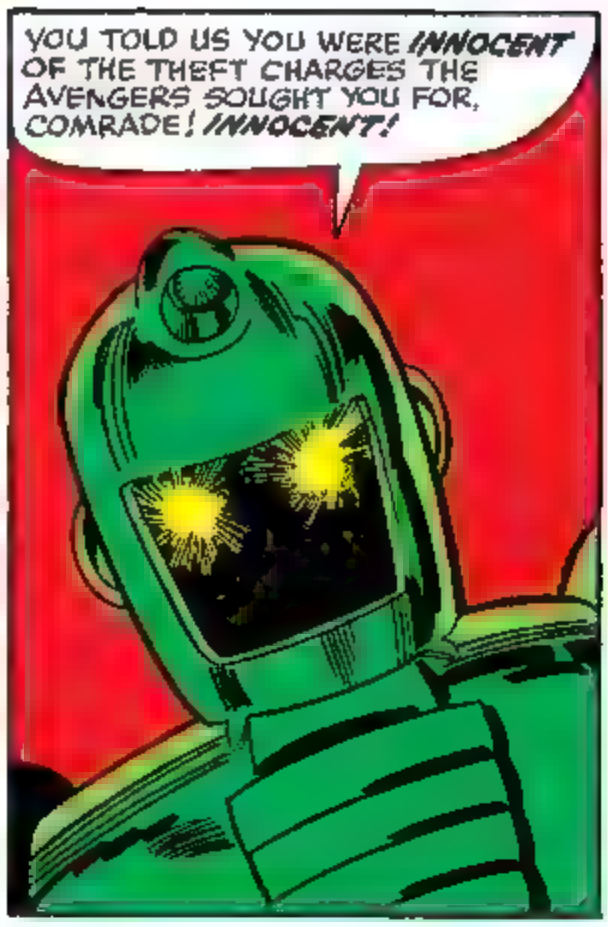

--A HOODED FIGURE, NEVER CLEARLY SEEN--
--SWINGS DOWN AND BELTS HIM BACK OUT!

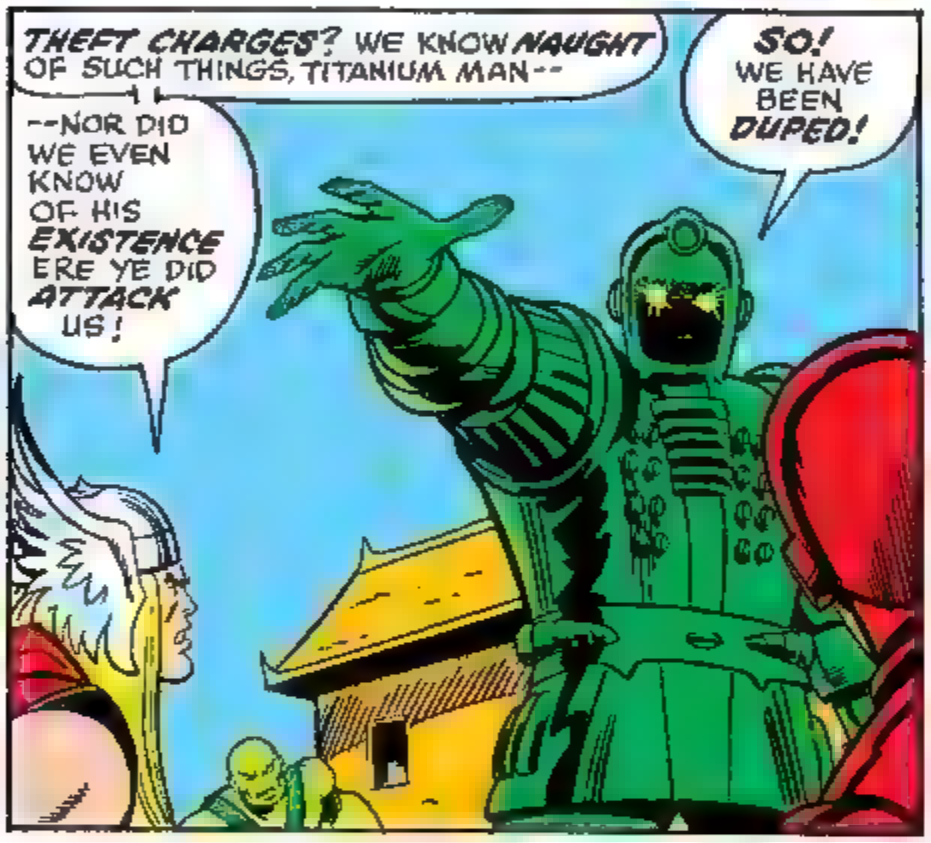
THAT'S IT-- ALL WE'LL SEE OF THIS MAN THIS TIME--AND IT'S MORE THAN IRON MAN WILL SEE.
IF YOU CAN'T STAY ON YOUR FEET, YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY, MISTER!
THE HOODED MAN-- KICKED ME WITH HIS BARE FEET-- KICKED MY ARMOR!
I CANNOT BELIEVE IT!

YOU HAD BEST CALL OFF THIS DECEPTION, SLASHER. IT'S OBVIOUS YOU INCITED IT.
NO DICE, BUDDY! YOU JOES ARE "PERSECUTIN'" LITTLE OLE ME, AND MY RAZOR-SHARP STEEL IS GONNA GET ME SOME REVENGE!
STEEL IS USELESS, SLASHER--

--AGAINST ONE WHO CAN WILL HIMSELF TO THE DURABILITY OF A DIAMOND.
CLANG!

ANOTHER OF MY POWERS IS THE SOLAR ENERGY I CAN FLASH FROM MY EYES--





NEXT ISH: THE RETURN OF THE MOST UNEXPECTED SUPER-VILLAIN OF ALL (REALLY!) IN A TALE TANTALIZINGLY TITLED **A QUIET HALF HOUR IN SAIGON!**

AVENGERS MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS®

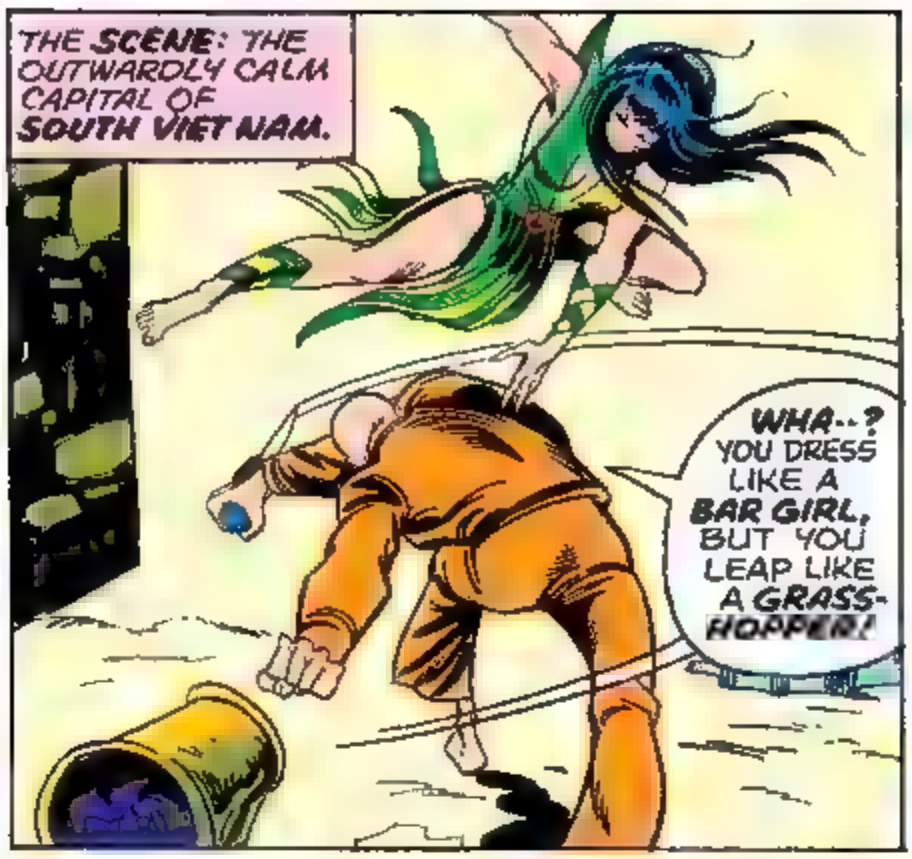
VS. THE LEGION OF THE UNLIVING!

THEY COME FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

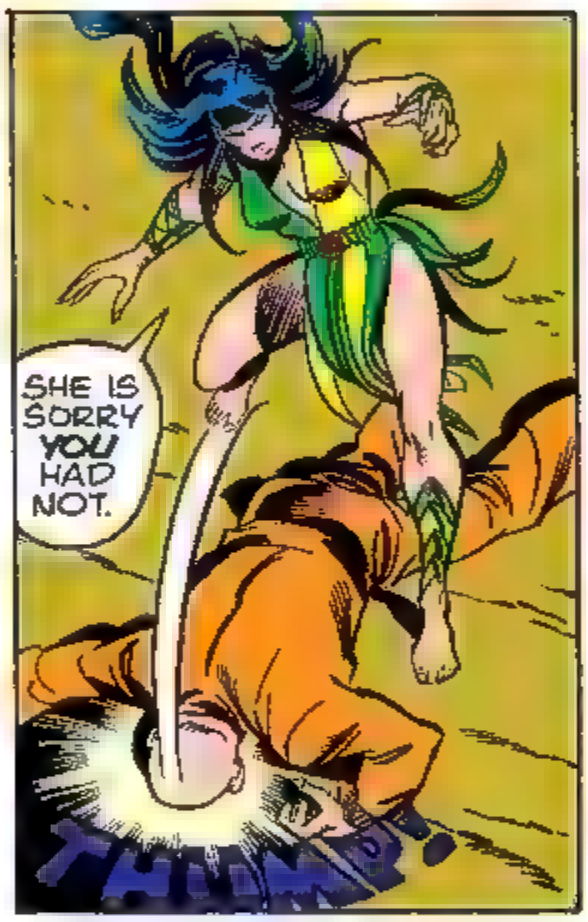
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

STEVE ENGLEHART Author	SAL BUSCEMA & JOE STATON Artists	TOM ORZECHOWSKI, lettering PHIL RACHELSON, coloring	ROY THOMAS Editor


THE SCENE: THE OUTWARDLY CALM CAPITAL OF SOUTH VIET NAM.
WHA--? YOU DRESS LIKE A BAR GIRL, BUT YOU LEAP LIKE A GRASS-HOPPER!

THIS ONE IS KNOWN AS MANTIS, ASSAILANT!
FEW IN THIS WORLD HAVE HEARD OF HER!

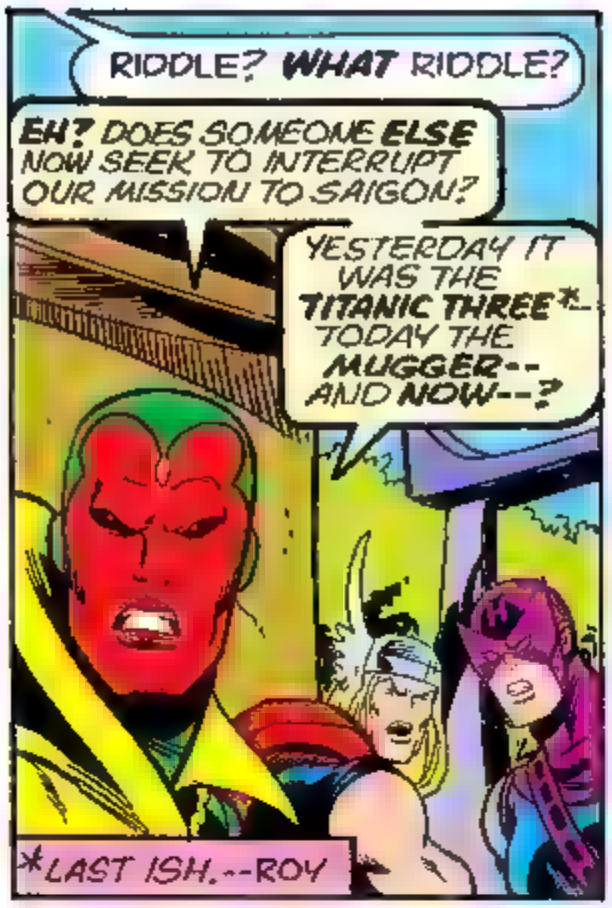
ƎUNNGN!Ɛ

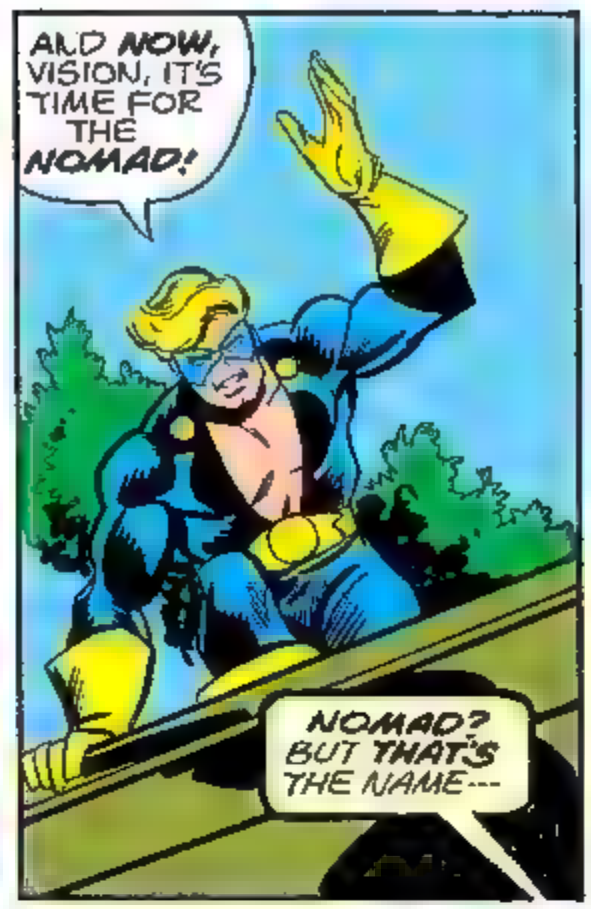

SHE IS SORRY YOU HAD NOT.
THUMP!

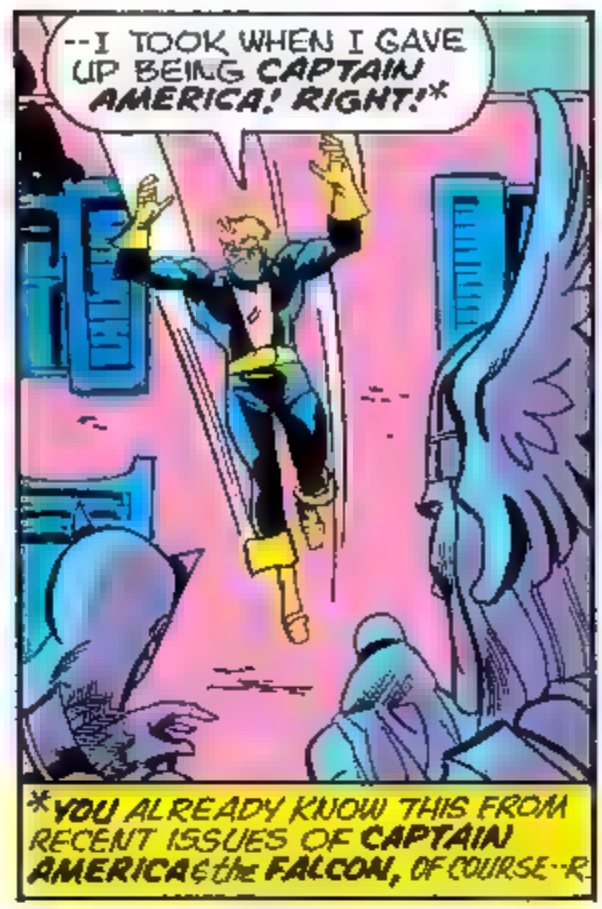
BUT IF YOU HAD HEARD--WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE HEARD? THAT SHE WAS A BAR GIRL, BEFORE SHE CAME TO STAND WITH THE MIGHTY AVENGERS?
THAT SHE IS NOW MOST PROBABLY--MOST MYSTERIOUSLY--TO BECOME A CELESTIAL MADONNA?

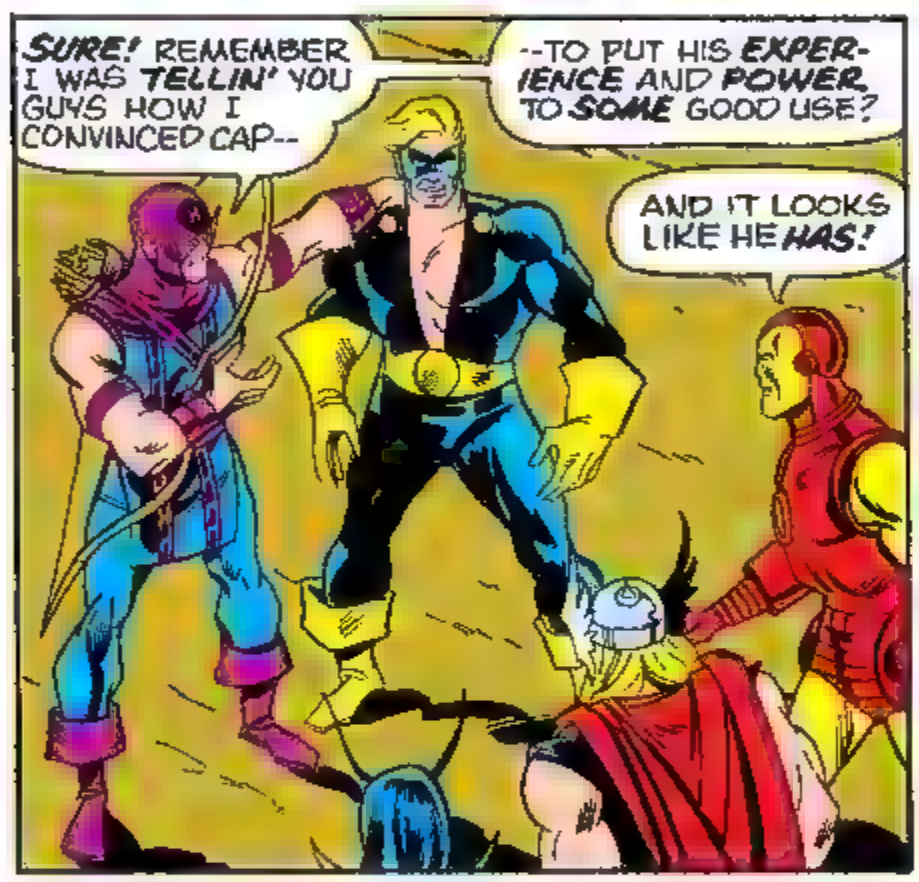
OR WOULD YOU HAVE HEARD THAT MANTIS IS A MYTH, UNKNOWN IN THE VERY STREETS HER MEMORY MAINTAINS SHE MATURED IN?
EVERYONE TELLS A DIFFERENT TALE REGARDING THIS ONE--

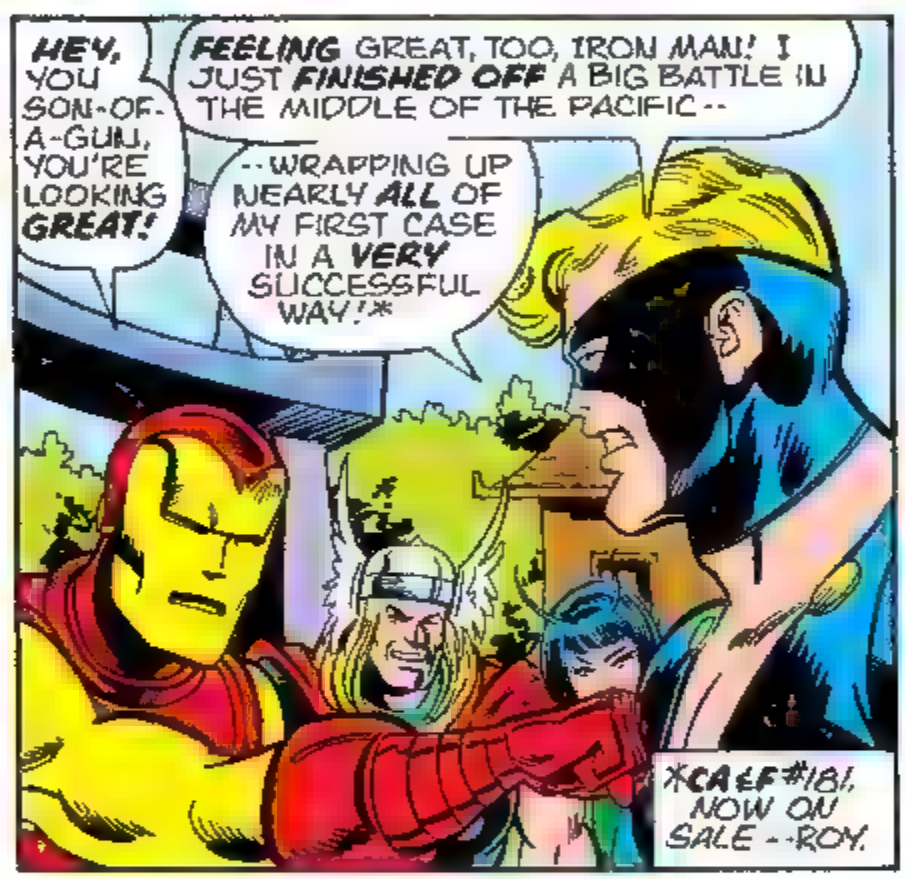
--AND SHE IS GROWING SICK TO DEATH OF THEM!
COURAGE, WOMAN! THIS SADNESS BE MOST UNLIKE THY USUAL DISPOSITION.
THOU HAST ALLIES WHO WILL NOT REST 'TIL THY RIDDLE BE SOLVED!

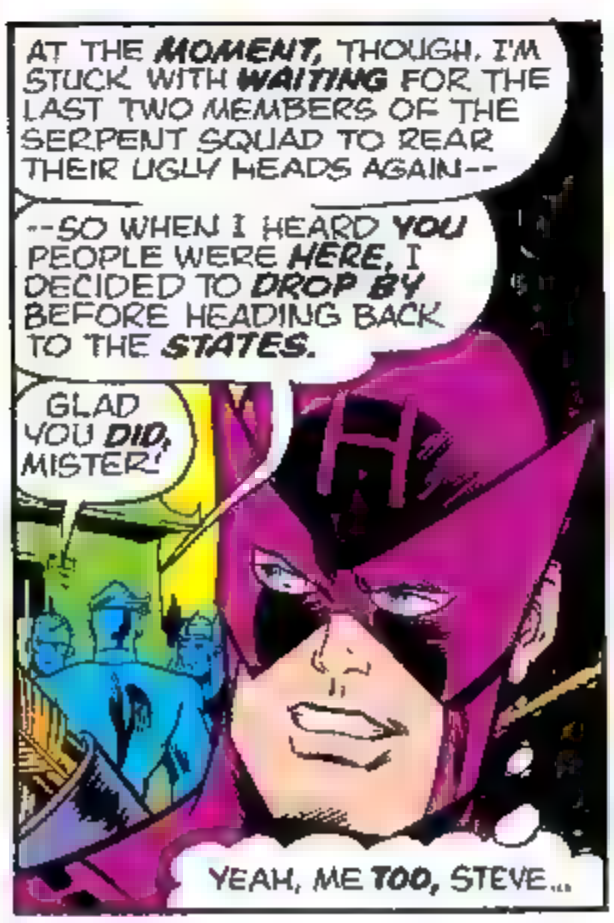

RIDDLE? WHAT RIDDLE?
EH? DOES SOMEONE ELSE NOW SEEK TO INTERRUPT OUR MISSION TO SAIGON?
YESTERDAY IT WAS THE TITANIC THREE*-- TODAY THE MUGGER-- AND NOW--?
*LAST ISH.--ROY

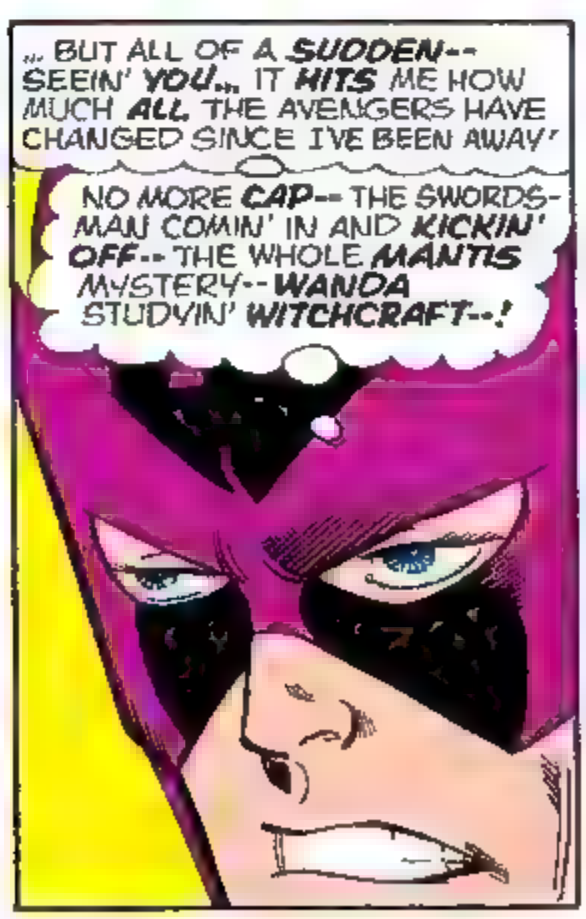

AND NOW, VISION, IT'S TIME FOR THE NOMAD!
NOMAD? BUT THAT'S THE NAME---


--I TOOK WHEN I GAVE UP BEING CAPTAIN AMERICA! RIGHT!*
*YOU ALREADY KNOW THIS FROM RECENT ISSUES OF CAPTAIN AMERICA & the FALCON, OF COURSE--R.


SURE! REMEMBER I WAS TELLIN' YOU GUYS HOW I CONVINCED CAP--
--TO PUT HIS EXPERIENCE AND POWER TO SOME GOOD USE?
AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE HAS!


HEY, YOU SON-OF-A-GUN, YOU'RE LOOKING GREAT!
FEELING GREAT, TOO, IRON MAN! I JUST FINISHED OFF A BIG BATTLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC--
--WRAPPING UP NEARLY ALL OF MY FIRST CASE IN A VERY SUCCESSFUL WAY!*
*CA&F #181, NOW ON SALE --ROY.


AT THE MOMENT, THOUGH, I'M STUCK WITH WAITING FOR THE LAST TWO MEMBERS OF THE SERPENT SQUAD TO REAR THEIR UGLY HEADS AGAIN--
--SO WHEN I HEARD YOU PEOPLE WERE HERE, I DECIDED TO DROP BY BEFORE HEADING BACK TO THE STATES.
GLAD YOU DID, MISTER!
YEAH, ME TOO, STEVE...

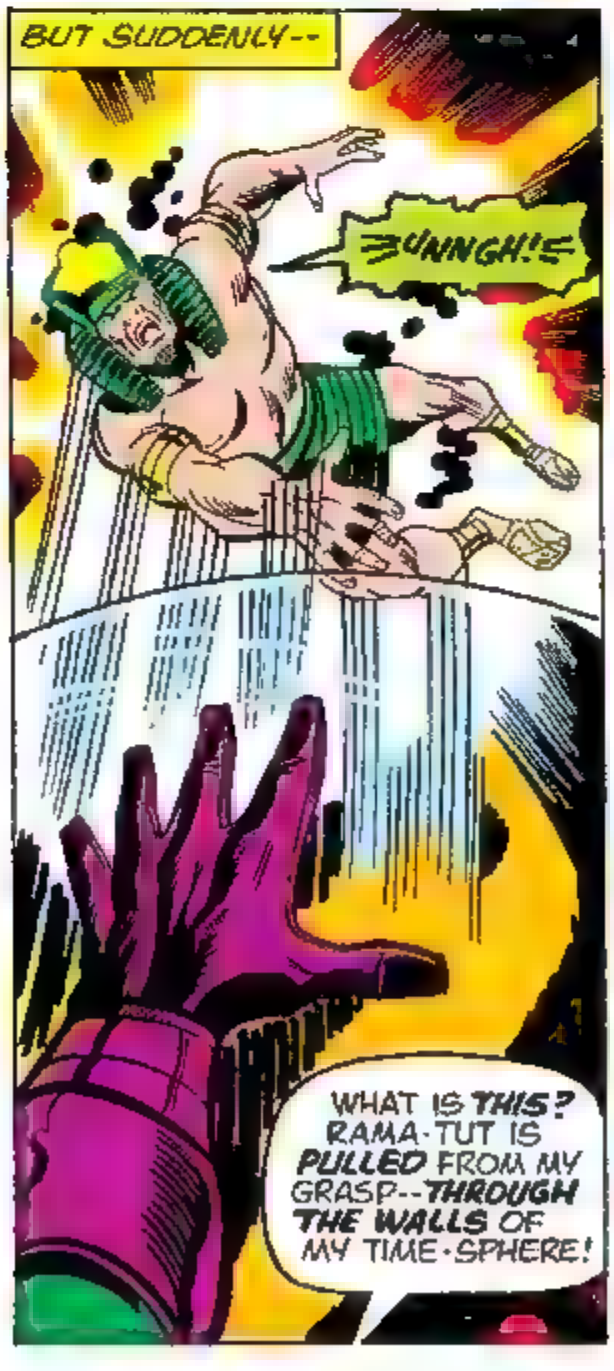

... BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN-- SEEIN' YOU... IT HITS ME HOW MUCH ALL THE AVENGERS HAVE CHANGED SINCE I'VE BEEN AWAY!
NO MORE CAP-- THE SWORDSMAN COMIN' IN AND KICKIN' OFF-- THE WHOLE MANTIS MYSTERY-- WANDA STUDYIN' WITCHCRAFT--!

ONE THING YOU CAN SAY ABOUT THIS GROUP: IT NEVER STANDS STILL! YOU STEP OUT OF THE PICTURE FOR A WHILE, AN' NOTHIN' HAS TIME TO WAIT FOR YA!
SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE A BEHIND-THE-TIMES BOWSLINGER...?
CUT...

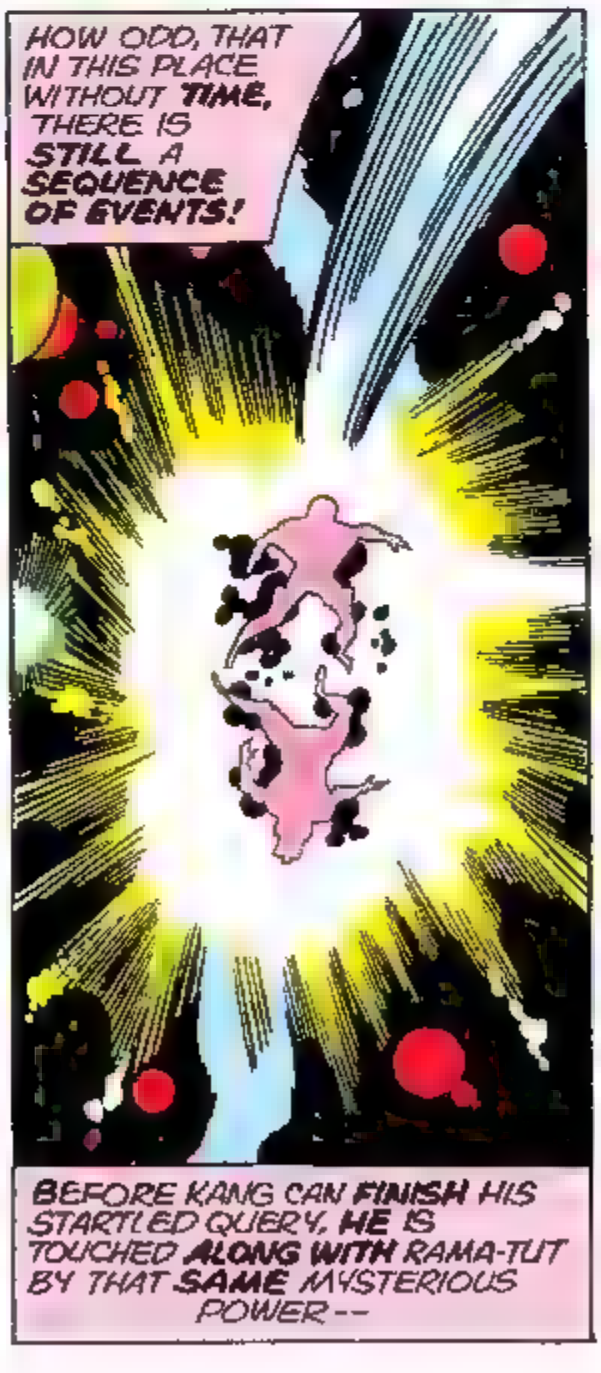
...TO THE MOST UNEXPECTED PLACE OF ALL--
--TO RE-ENCOUNTER THE MOST UNEXPECTED VILLAIN OF ALL!
KANG THE CONQUEROR FIGHTS A NEVER-ENDING BATTLE AGAINST HIS FUTURE SELF, THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT, IN THE MIDST OF A MADDENING TIME VORTEX!

CEASE YOUR STRUGGLES, KANG! ACCEPT THE FACT THAT I AM WHAT YOU WILL BECOME!
NEVER! NEVER! NOT THROUGH ALL OF TIME!

I AM KANG! I WAS BORN TO CONQUER! YOU CANNOT MAKE ME BELIEVE THAT I WILL BECOME AS SOFT AS YOU!
THOUGH WE FALL THROUGH THIS VOID FOR A THOUSAND THOUSAND ERAS, I'LL YET FIGHT ON!


BUT SUDDENLY--
UNNGH!
WHAT IS THIS? RAMA-TUT IS PULLED FROM MY GRASP--THROUGH THE WALLS OF MY TIME-SPHERE!

HE'S UNCONSCIOUS! BUT WHO COULD HAVE THE POWER---


HOW ODD, THAT IN THIS PLACE WITHOUT TIME, THERE IS STILL A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS!
BEFORE KANG CAN FINISH HIS STARTLED QUERY, HE IS TOUCHED ALONG WITH RAMA-TUT BY THAT SAME MYSTERIOUS POWER--

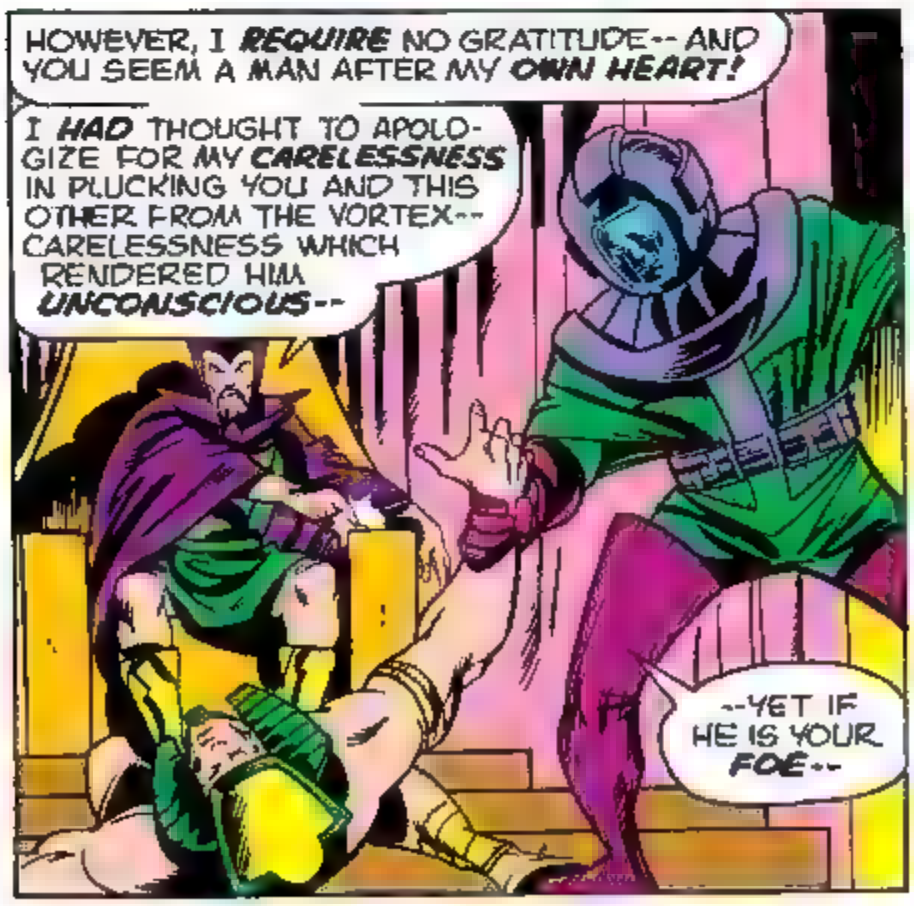
--AND THE **NEXT** EVENT HE IS AWARE OF... IS THEIR **SOLIDIFICATION** IN A PLACE POSSIBLY EVEN **MORE** BIZARRE!

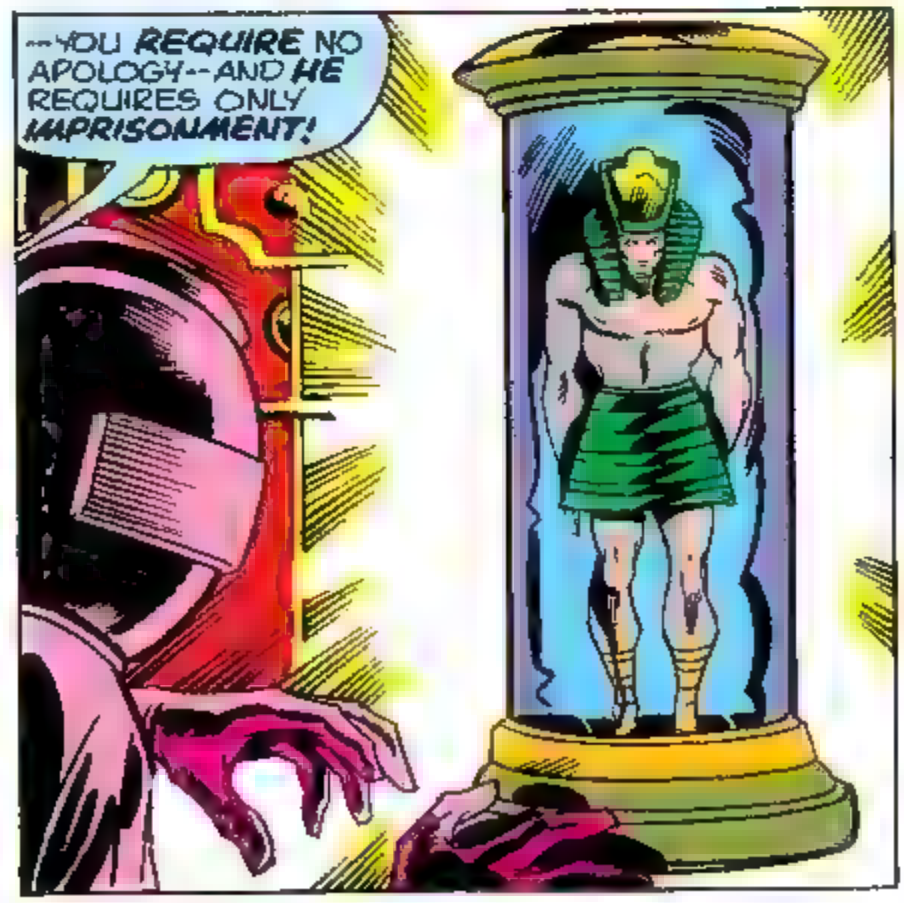
POSSIBLY, DID WE SAY? NAY -- **DEFINITELY!**

WELCOME, TIME TRAVELERS! WELCOME TO THE THRONE ROOM OF--

--**IMMORTUS!***

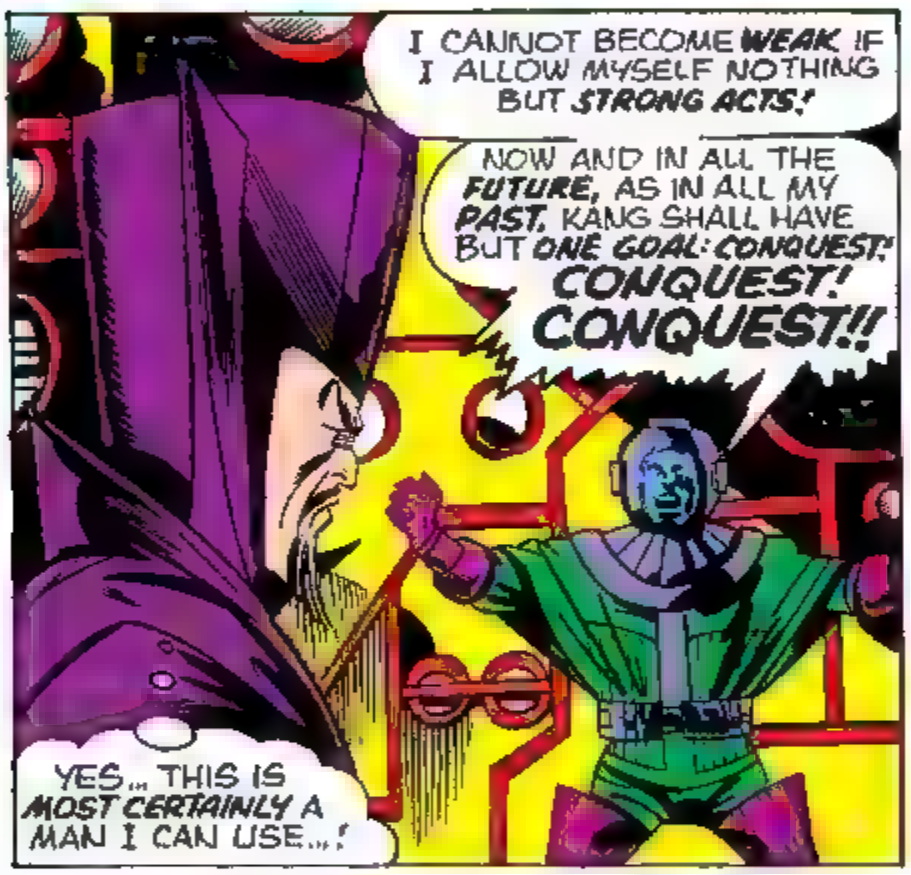
*AND HARKEN BACK TO **AVENGERS** #10 FOR HIS ONLY PREVIOUS APPEARANCE. --ROY.

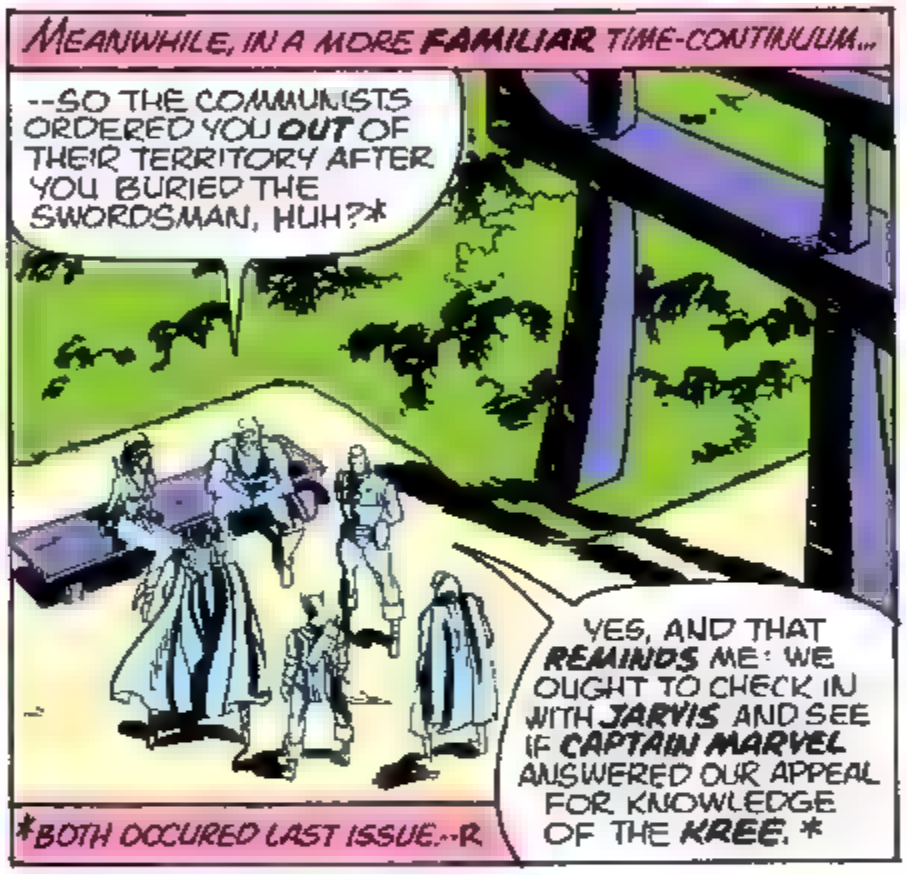


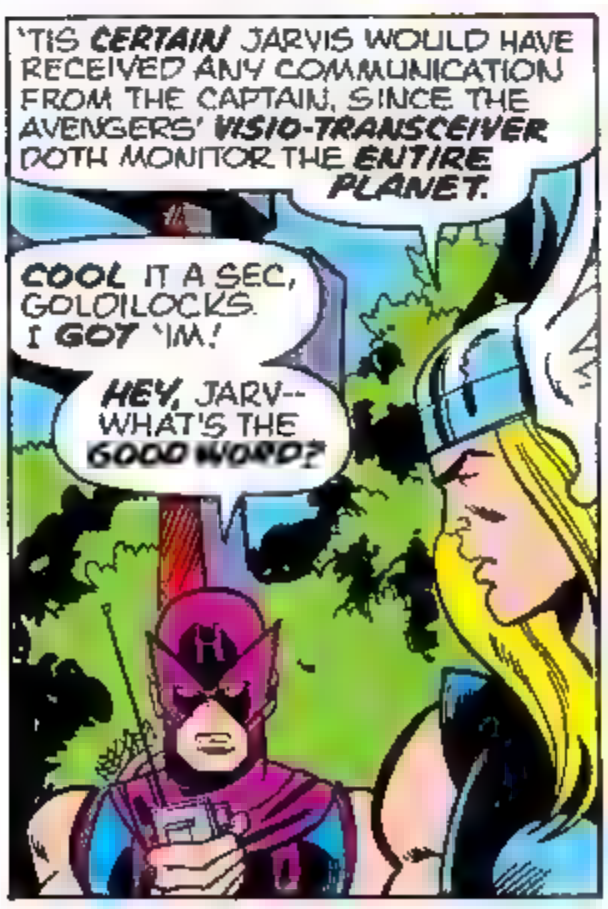


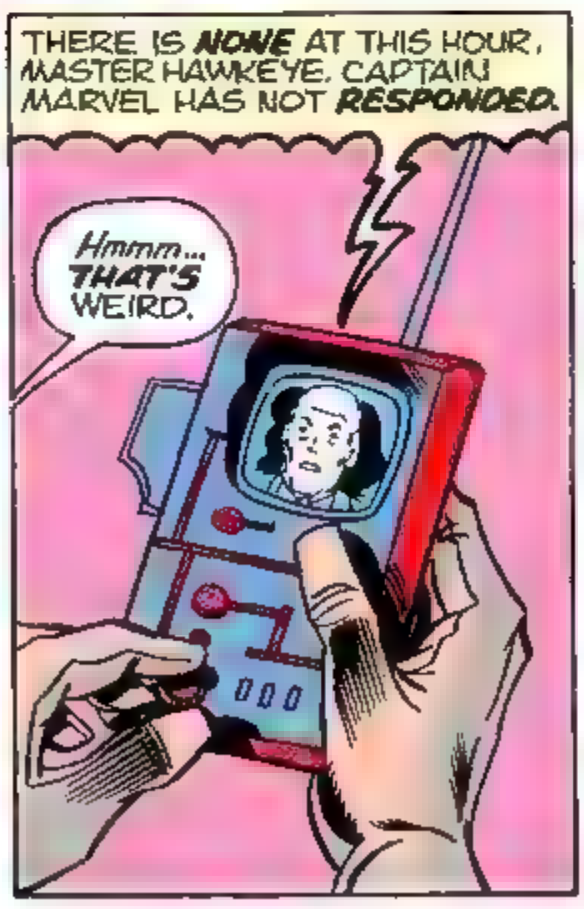
YOU SIMPLE FOOL! YOU CAME FROM MY FUTURE, TO TELL OF HOW I, KANG, WOULD REPUDIATE MY WAYS AND LOVE COMPASSION RATHER THAN CONQUEST!*
IN SO DOING, YOU HAVE INSURED THE REVERSE!
*GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #2--R.T.

TO DO AS YOU PREDICT WOULD RENDER MY ENTIRE LIFE TO THIS POINT MEANINGLESS, AND THAT CANNOT BE! I WON'T ALLOW IT!
I WILL FIGHT ANY AND ALL FEELINGS OF COMPASSION WITHIN ME!

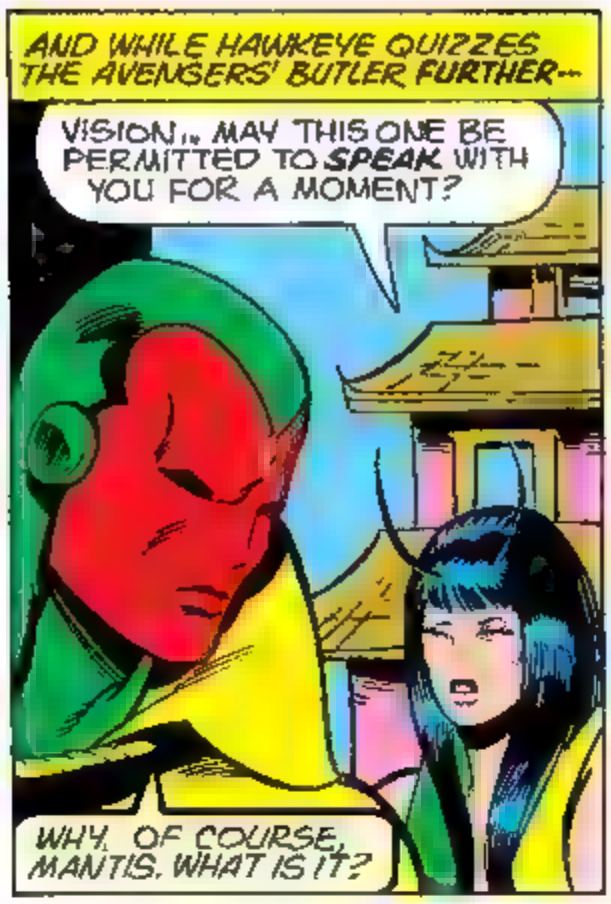

I CANNOT BECOME WEAK IF I ALLOW MYSELF NOTHING BUT STRONG ACTS!
NOW AND IN ALL THE FUTURE, AS IN ALL MY PAST, KANG SHALL HAVE BUT ONE GOAL: CONQUEST! CONQUEST! CONQUEST!!
YES... THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY A MAN I CAN USE...!


MEANWHILE, IN A MORE FAMILIAR TIME-CONTINUUM...
--SO THE COMMUNISTS ORDERED YOU OUT OF THEIR TERRITORY AFTER YOU BURIED THE SWORDSMAN, HUH?*
YES, AND THAT REMINDS ME: WE OUGHT TO CHECK IN WITH JARVIS AND SEE IF CAPTAIN MARVEL ANSWERED OUR APPEAL FOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE KREE.*
*BOTH OCCURED LAST ISSUE--R.


'TIS CERTAIN JARVIS WOULD HAVE RECEIVED ANY COMMUNICATION FROM THE CAPTAIN, SINCE THE AVENGERS' VISIO-TRANSCEIVER BOTH MONITOR THE ENTIRE PLANET.
COOL IT A SEC, GOLDILOCKS. I GOT 'IM!
HEY, JARV-- WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD?


THERE IS NONE AT THIS HOUR, MASTER HAWKEYE. CAPTAIN MARVEL HAS NOT RESPONDED.
Hmmm... THAT'S WEIRD.

WELL, SO WE HAVEN'T WASTED OUR DIME, WHY'N'T YA CALL WANDA TO THE SCREEN FOR A QUICK CHAT?
I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT I CANNOT.
CANNOT?
HER MISS HARKNESS LEFT STRICT ORDERS THAT THEY WERE NOT TO BE DISTURBED.

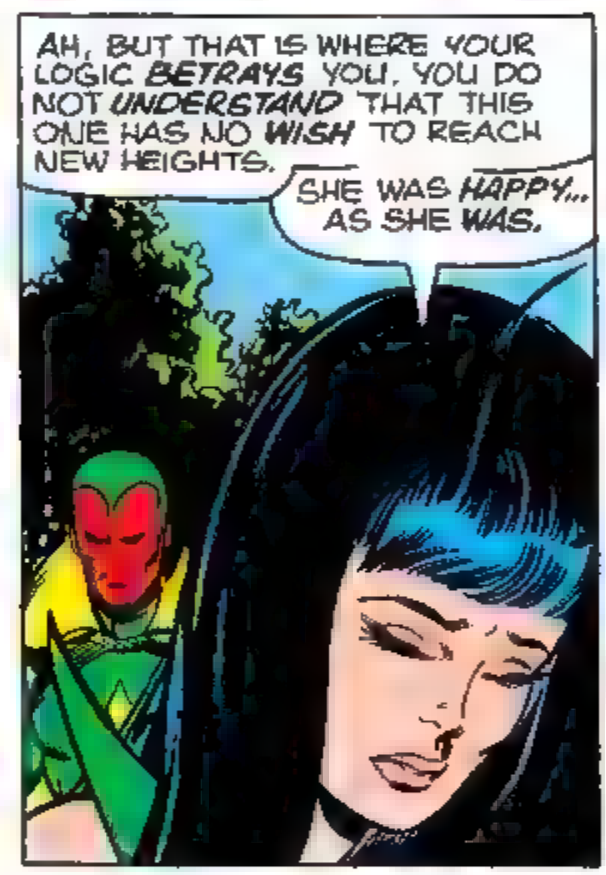

AND WHILE HAWKEYE QUIZZES THE AVENGERS' BUTLER FURTHER--
VISION... MAY THIS ONE BE PERMITTED TO SPEAK WITH YOU FOR A MOMENT?
WHY, OF COURSE, MANTIS. WHAT IS IT?

VISION THIS ONE MUST APOLOGIZE FOR HER ATTEMPTS TO ENSNARE YOU IN HER PASSIONS FOUR MORNINGS PAST. *
MANTIS, THERE IS NO NEED---
PLEASE! THERE IS A NEED.
*IN #128 -ROY

THIS ONE FEELS, NOW, THAT THIS SEGMENT OF HER LIFE IS COMING TO AN END, THOUGH SHE STILL KNOWS NEITHER WHY NOR HOW, SHE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR A NEW ROLE IN LIFE'S SCHEME

THIS ONE MUST PUT HER AFFAIRS IN ORDER SO THAT SHE MAY BE PREPARED FOR WHATEVER MAY NEXT OCCUR.
MANTIS, YOU'RE TAKING THIS TOO SERIOUSLY.

I BEAR YOU NO ILL WILL FOR WHAT YOU DID.
IF ANYTHING, I'M FLATTERED--
--AND IF AN ANDROID MAY RISE TO SUCH A HUMAN EMOTION, WHAT NEW HEIGHTS MAY YOU REACH?


AH, BUT THAT IS WHERE YOUR LOGIC BETRAYS YOU. YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THIS ONE HAS NO WISH TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS.
SHE WAS HAPPY... AS SHE WAS.

...YEAH, I'D HAVE TO SAY I'M HAPPY NOW. AFTER I BROKE UP THE SERPENT SQUAD, SOME SECURITY GUARDS TOLD ME I SHOULD HAVE LET THEM DO IT--
--BUT OVERALL, I'M SATISFIED.
IT'S STILL HARD TO GET USED TO YOU AS THE NOMAD, THOUGH

NOT FOR ME, IRON MAN! AMERICA PUT THE WHITE HOUSE SCANDALS BEHIND IT AND BEGAN AGAIN EXACTLY LIKE I DID, AND WE CAN ALL AGREE...IT FEELS GOOD.

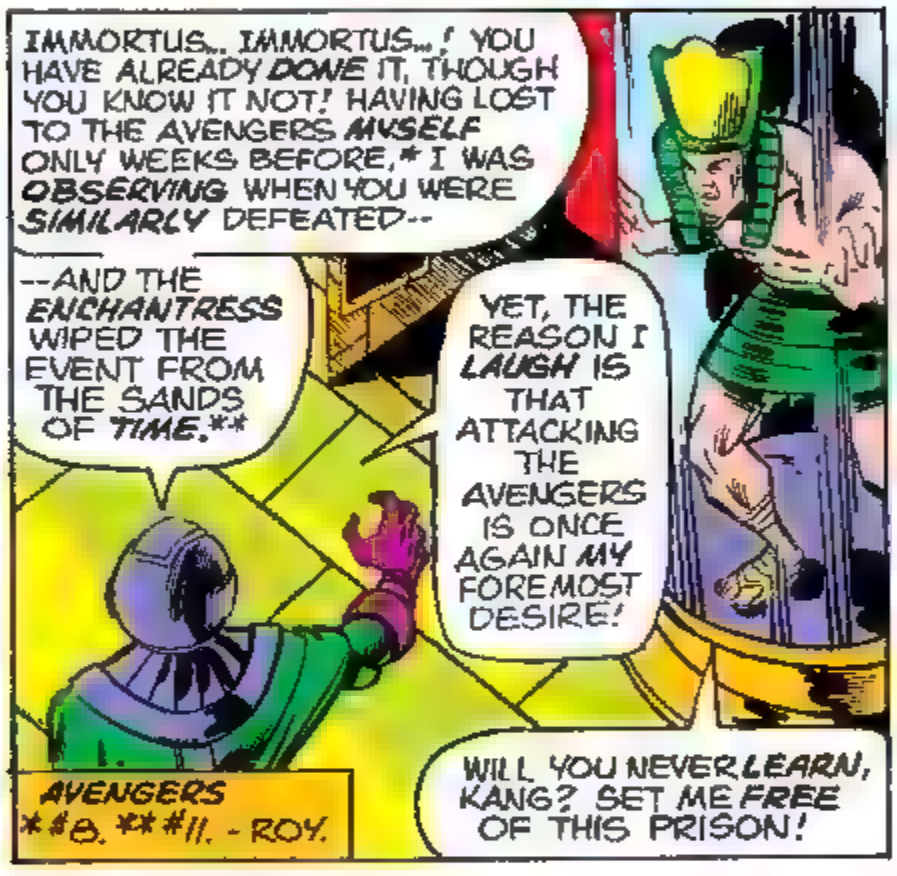
WILT THOU REJOIN THE AVENGERS THEN, NOMAD?
SURE, THOR--RIGHT AFTER I FINISH OFF THE SERPENT SQUAD, I'LL BE READY FOR DUTY!
GOOD MAN!

THE BOND THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THOSE WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO CALL THEMSELVES AVENGERS IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN.
IT'S A SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE AND COMERADERIE--
--A KINSHIP KNOWN TO ONLY 14 IN ALL THE WORLD.
MANTIS LOOKS ON--

--A FRIEND, BUT NOT AN AVENGER--AND MARVELS THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE CHOSEN TO ALLY THEMSELVES WITH HER.
HER THOUGHTS, TURNED INTROSPECTIVE AFTER SO MANY MONTHS--

--ARE BROKEN ONLY BELATEDLY BY AN EMPATHIC ALARM, WARNING OF SOMEONE WATCHING HER FROM THE ROOFTOPS ABOVE.
AND BY THEN, THERE IS NO ONE THERE.

THIRTEEN MINUTES HAVE PASSED IN SAIGON... WHILE FIVE HOURS HAVE DIED IN LIMBO.
--THE AVENGERS?!! YOU WISH TO ATTACK THE AVENGERS?
YOU WISH TO ATTACK THE AVENGERS?
I HAVE SAID IT! WHY DO YOU REACT WITH SUCH INCREDULITY?
I HAVE ONLY AWAITED A COMPETENT ALLY, SUCH AS YOURSELF.


IMMORTUS... IMMORTUS...! YOU HAVE ALREADY DONE IT, THOUGH YOU KNOW IT NOT! HAVING LOST TO THE AVENGERS MYSELF ONLY WEEKS BEFORE,* I WAS OBSERVING WHEN YOU WERE SIMILARLY DEFEATED--
--AND THE ENCHANTRESS WIPED THE EVENT FROM THE SANDS OF TIME.**
YET, THE REASON I LAUGH IS THAT ATTACKING THE AVENGERS IS ONCE AGAIN MY FOREMOST DESIRE!
AVENGERS *#8, **#11. - ROY.
WILL YOU NEVER LEARN, KANG? SET ME FREE OF THIS PRISON!

YOU WILL NOT CAPTURE THE CELESTIAL MADONNA---
DO NOT SPEAK ANOTHER WORD, RAMA-TUT! I WARN YOU, I SHALL HEAR NO MORE--
--OR YOU SHALL SPEAK NO MORE!
THE DEATH OF MY FUTURE-SELF WILL NOT HARM ME!

I CAN DO ANYTHING I WISH TO DO--AND ALREADY, MY COMMAND OF TACTICS HAS GIVEN ME A NEW PLAN, CERTAIN TO BRING THE AVENGERS TO THEIR KNEES!
IT INVOLVES POWERS I KNOW YOU POSSESS, IMMORTUS! COME--LET US BEGIN!

YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO *PLUCK* MEN FROM *ANY ERA*--AND *FORCE* THEM TO DO YOUR BIDDING. I WISH TO MAKE *USE* OF IT!

THEN USE THAT *MACHINE*. IT IS *SYMBIOTICALLY LINKED* WITH MY MIND--

--AND ANY *TIME-TRAVELER* WILL *IMMEDIATELY* UNDERSTAND ITS OPERATION. BUT TELL ME WHAT YOU PROPOSE TO *DO*---

YOU WILL *SEE* IT AS I DO IT, MY FRIEND. THIS SUDDEN, SECOND CHANCE TO DESTROY THE AVENGERS HAS *FILLED* MY THOUGHTS--

--WITH THE *GRANDEST* OF SCHEMES, AND I CAN BROOK *NO DELAY!*

LUCK SAT AT MY SIDE WHEN I RESCUED YOU, KANG! YOUR *DRIVE TO CONQUER* AND MY *MASTERY OF TIME* WILL BE *INVINCIBLE!*

IMPATIENTLY, KANG SCANS THE CONTROLS-- SEES THAT HE DOES UNDERSTAND THEM--

--AND SETS THEM IN MOTION!

"YOU SEE, IMMORTUS, YOUR FIRST FORAY FAILED BECAUSE YOU CHOSE NON-SUPER-POWERED CHAMPIONS SUCH AS PAUL BUNYAN, ATTILA THE HUN, AND SO FORTH...

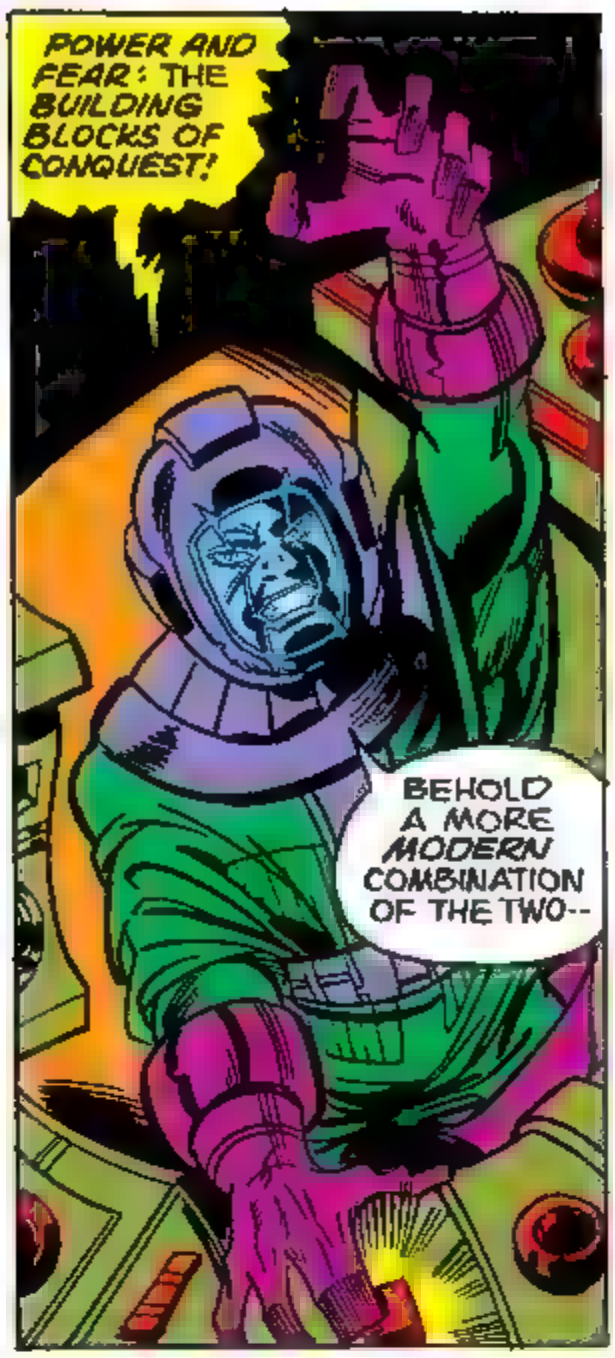
"... WHILE I CHOOSE TO SUMMON BEINGS MORE SUITED TO THE TASK! BUT MORE THAN THAT--

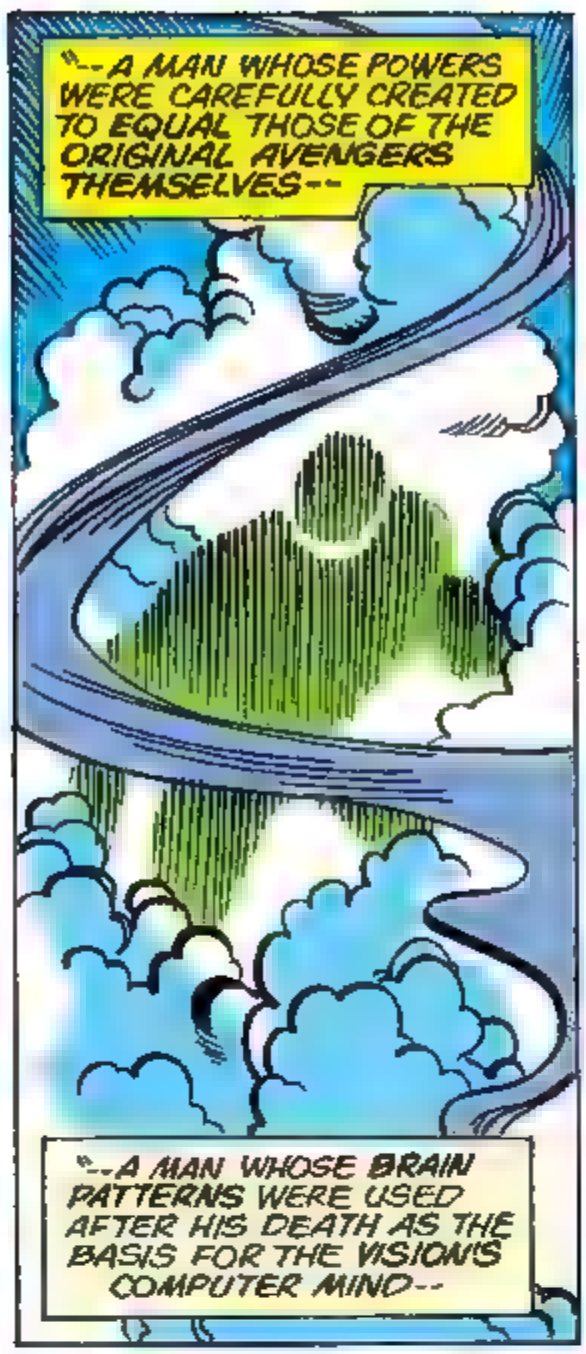
"--I WANT BEINGS WHO WILL BRING THE CRUCIAL ELEMENT OF FEAR TO THE CAMPAIGN-- BECAUSE IN THE YEAR 1974--

"--THEY ARE ALL WITHIN THE SHADOWY REALMS OF.. **THE UNLIVING!**

"BEHOLD MY FIRST SELECTION--FROM THE YEAR 1898--

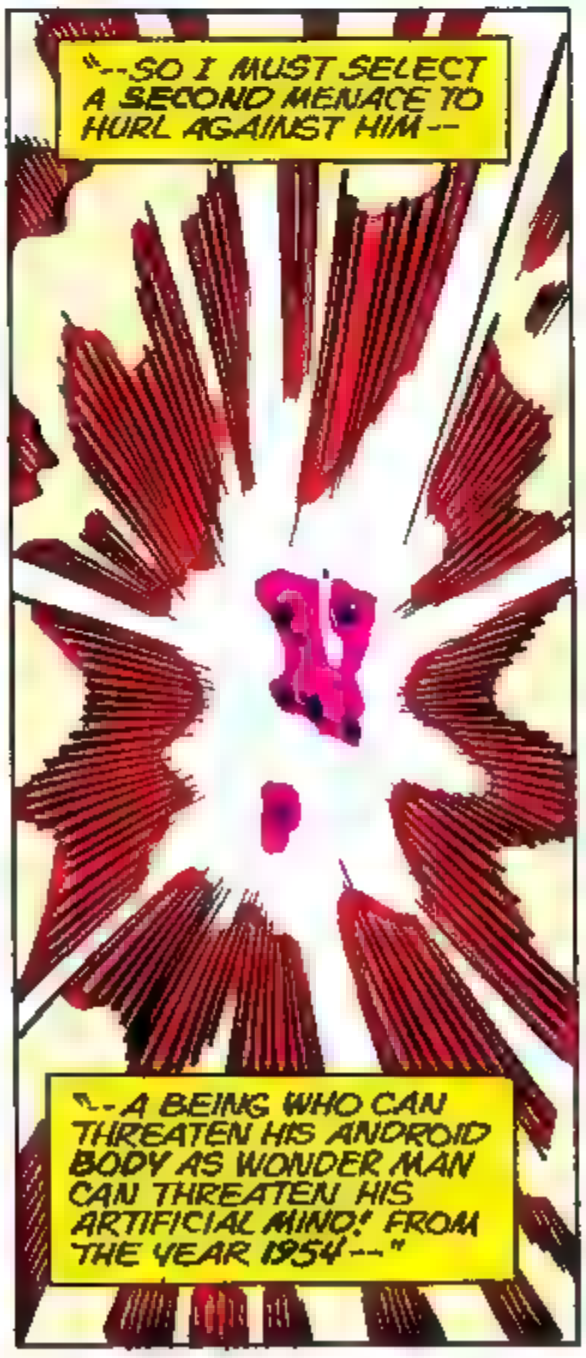
--THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER!

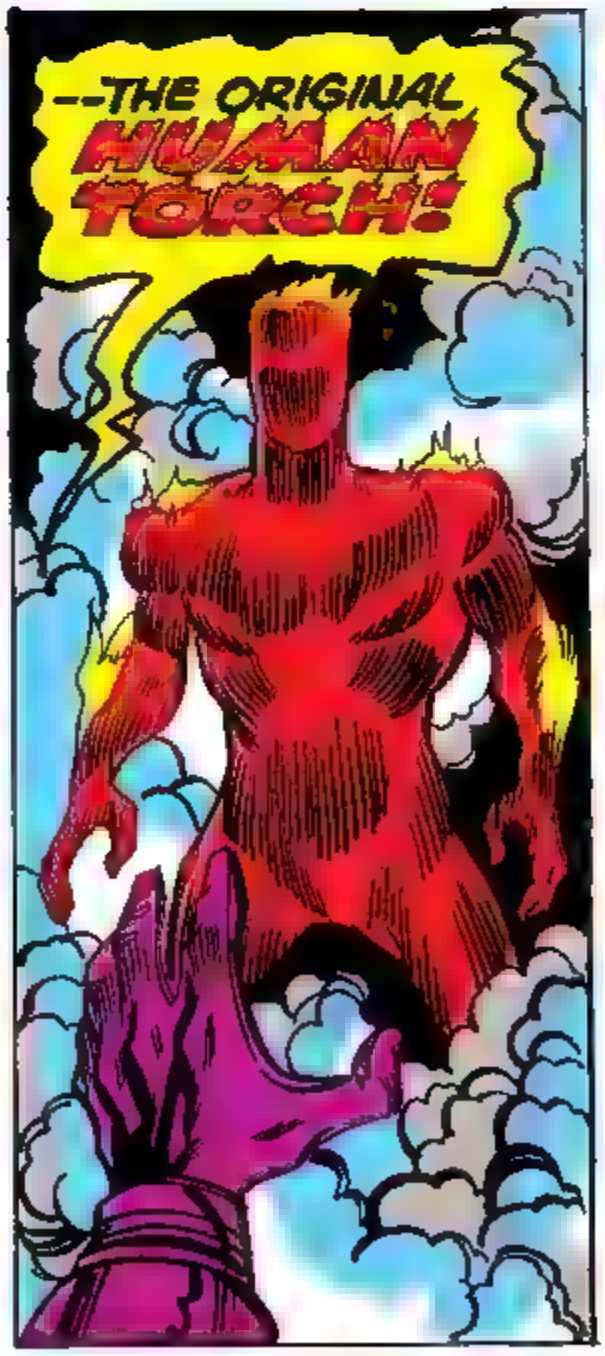

POWER AND FEAR: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CONQUEST!
BEHOLD A MORE MODERN COMBINATION OF THE TWO--


"--A MAN WHOSE POWERS WERE CAREFULLY CREATED TO EQUAL THOSE OF THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS THEMSELVES--
"--A MAN WHOSE BRAIN PATTERNS WERE USED AFTER HIS DEATH AS THE BASIS FOR THE VISION'S COMPUTER MIND--

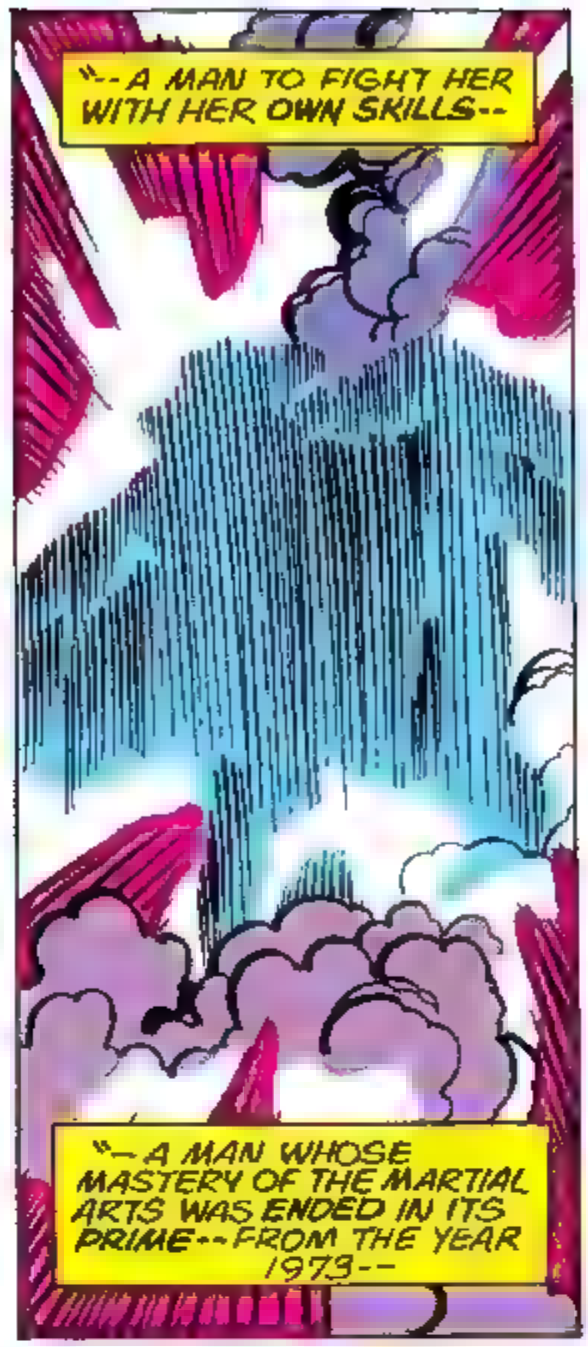
"--FROM THE YEAR 1964--
WONDER MAN!
*IN AVENGERS #9.- ROY.

HIS APPEARANCE WILL CAUSE CONSTERNATION IN ALL THE AVENGERS-- BUT HIS MOST IMPORTANT EFFECT WILL BE ON THE VISION!
OF THEM ALL, THE ANDROID HAS THE MOST POTENTIAL FOR REMAINING LOGICAL IN THE FACE OF OUR ASSAULT--

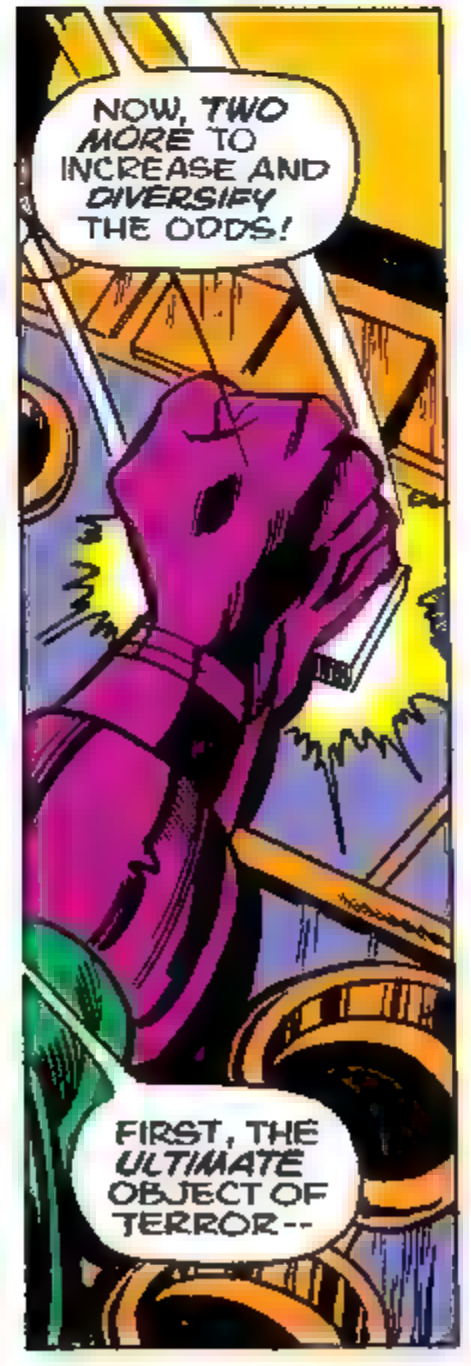

"--SO I MUST SELECT A SECOND MENACE TO HURL AGAINST HIM--
"--A BEING WHO CAN THREATEN HIS ANDROID BODY AS WONDER MAN CAN THREATEN HIS ARTIFICIAL MIND! FROM THE YEAR 1954--"


--THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH!

BUT I NEED MORE WARRIORS! MORE!!
THOUGH ALL THE AVENGERS MUST DIE, MANTIS MUST BE TAKEN WITHOUT HARM, SO THAT SHE MAY MARRY ME AND MAKE ME RULER OF THE UNIVERSE!
THUS, I CHOOSE--

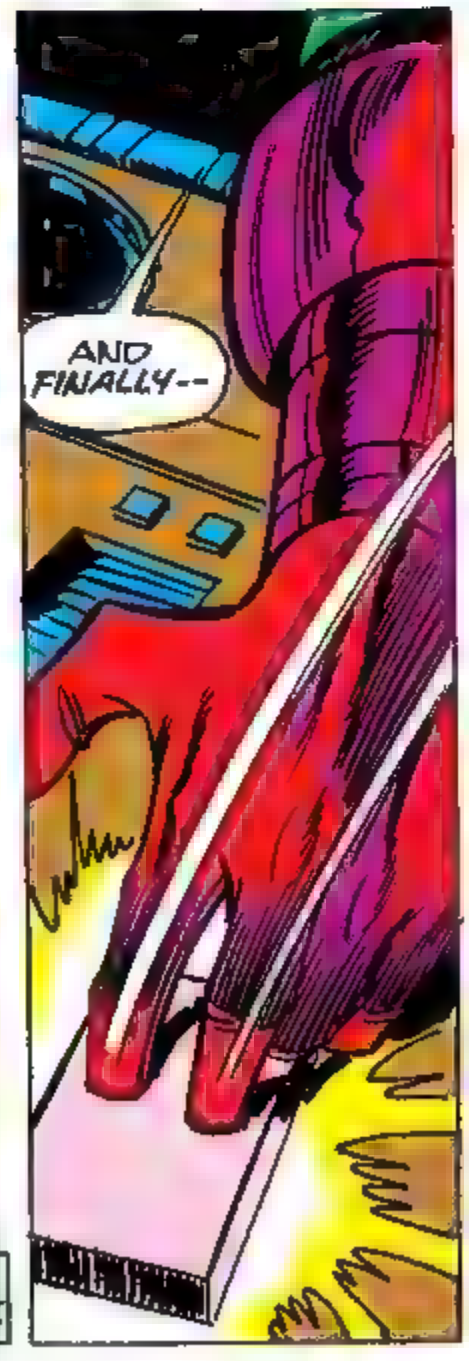

"--A MAN TO FIGHT HER WITH HER OWN SKILLS--
"--A MAN WHOSE MASTERY OF THE MARTIAL ARTS WAS ENDED IN ITS PRIME--FROM THE YEAR 1973--

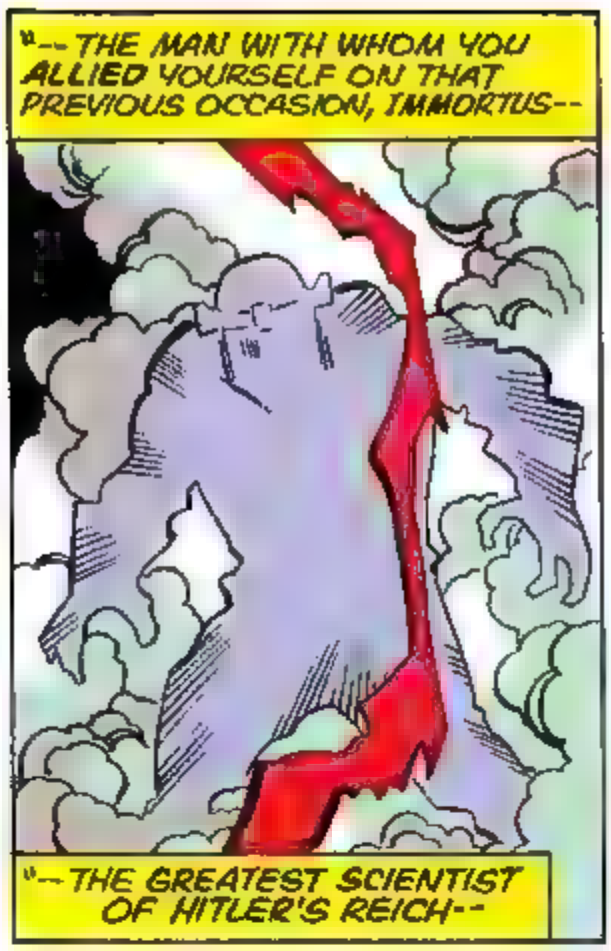
"--MIDNIGHT!"*
*MASTER OF KUNG FU #16. - ROY.

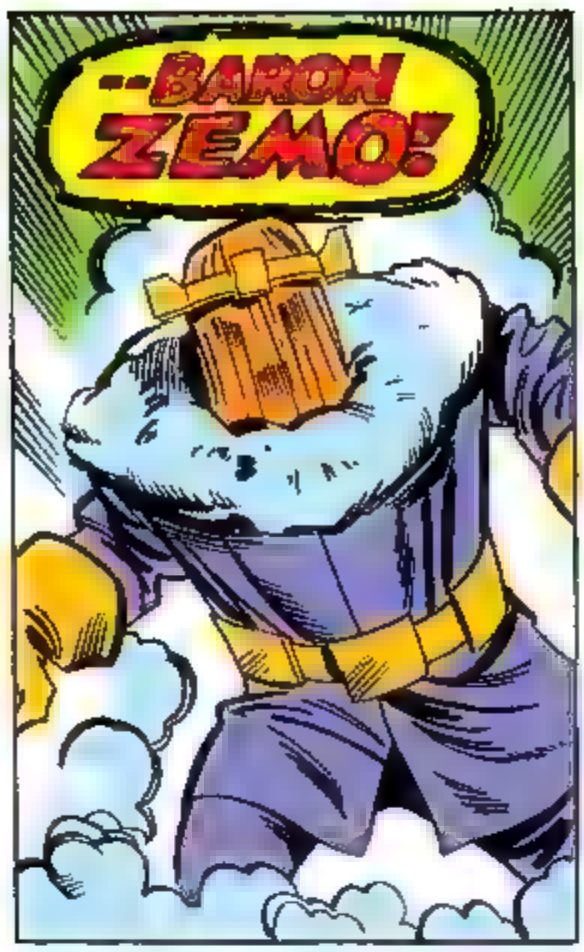

NOW, TWO MORE TO INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY THE ODDS!
FIRST, THE ULTIMATE OBJECT OF TERROR--

"--A CREATURE WHO ALREADY COMES FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE!
"I CALL, FROM THE YEAR 1969--

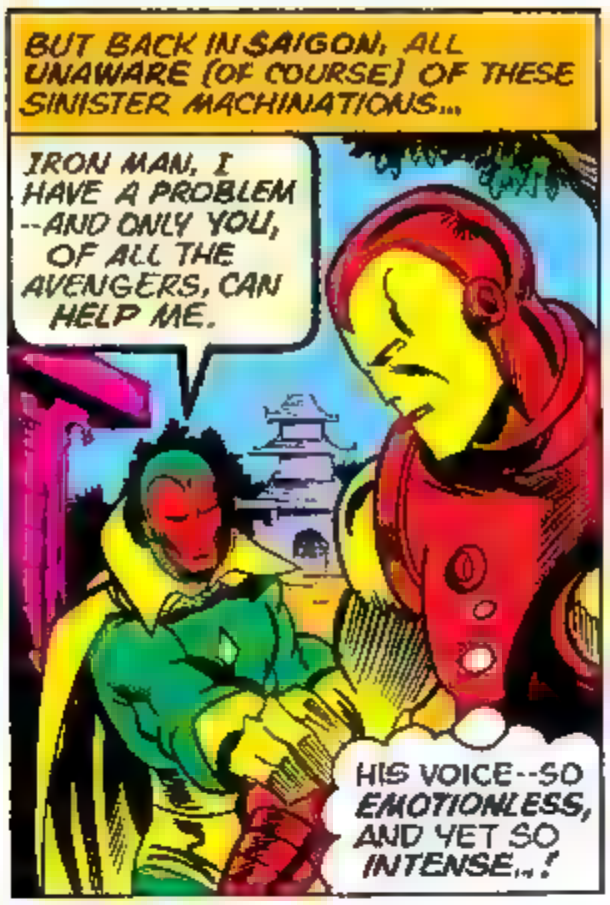
"--THE GHOST!*
*WHO COULD FORGET SILVER SURFER #8-9?-R.T.


AND FINALLY--





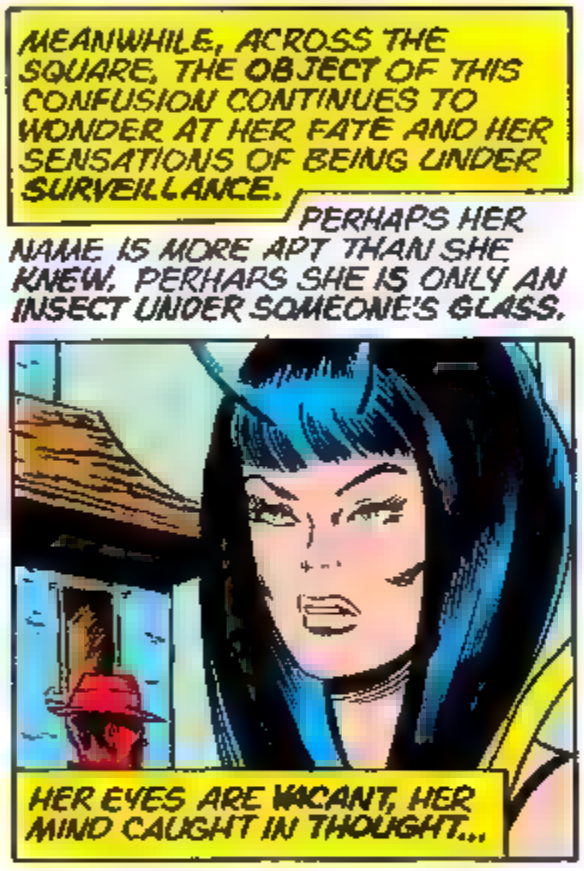
--THE LEGION OF THE UNLIVING!


BUT BACK IN SAIGON, ALL UNAWARE (OF COURSE) OF THESE SINISTER MACHINATIONS...
IRON MAN, I HAVE A PROBLEM --AND ONLY YOU, OF ALL THE AVENGERS, CAN HELP ME.
HIS VOICE--SO EMOTIONLESS, AND YET SO INTENSE...!

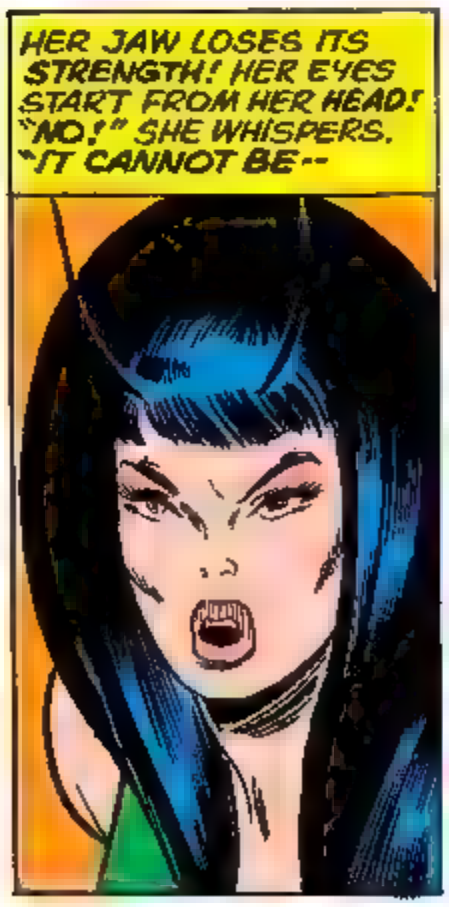
IRON MAN, YOUR EMPLOYER, TONY STARK, IS A RENOWNED PLAYBOY. STANDING AT HIS SIDE ALL THESE YEARS--
--YOU MUST HAVE LEARNED MUCH REGARDING MATTERS OF THE HEART. YOU SEE, I LOVE WANDA--
--BUT OF LATE, I FIND MANTIS' PRESENCE... DISTRACTING.

HER DISTRESS...THE IDEA THAT SHE MAY SOON BE LEAVING US-- THESE THINGS TUG AT MY THOUGHTS...
uh... LOOK, VISION...
I'M NOT SURE I SHOULD GET INVOLVED IN THIS...!

LOVE'S A VERY PERSONAL THING --uh-- NOT THE SAME FOR ANY TWO PEOPLE, AND--um---
I'M SORRY. THE SUBJECT EMBARRASSES YOU. I DIDN'T REALIZE.
I SEE THAT THIS IS TRULY A SUBJECT BEYOND MY KNOWLEDGE.
I WON'T BROACH IT AGAIN.
THANKS.

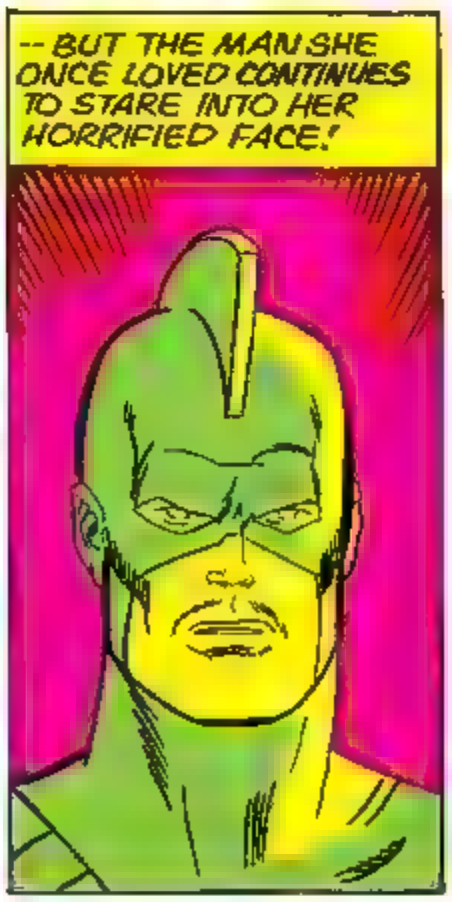

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE SQUARE, THE OBJECT OF THIS CONFUSION CONTINUES TO WONDER AT HER FATE AND HER SENSATIONS OF BEING UNDER SURVEILLANCE.
PERHAPS HER NAME IS MORE APT THAN SHE KNEW. PERHARS SHE IS ONLY AN INSECT UNDER SOMEONE'S GLASS.
HER EYES ARE VACANT, HER MIND CAUGHT IN THOUGHT...

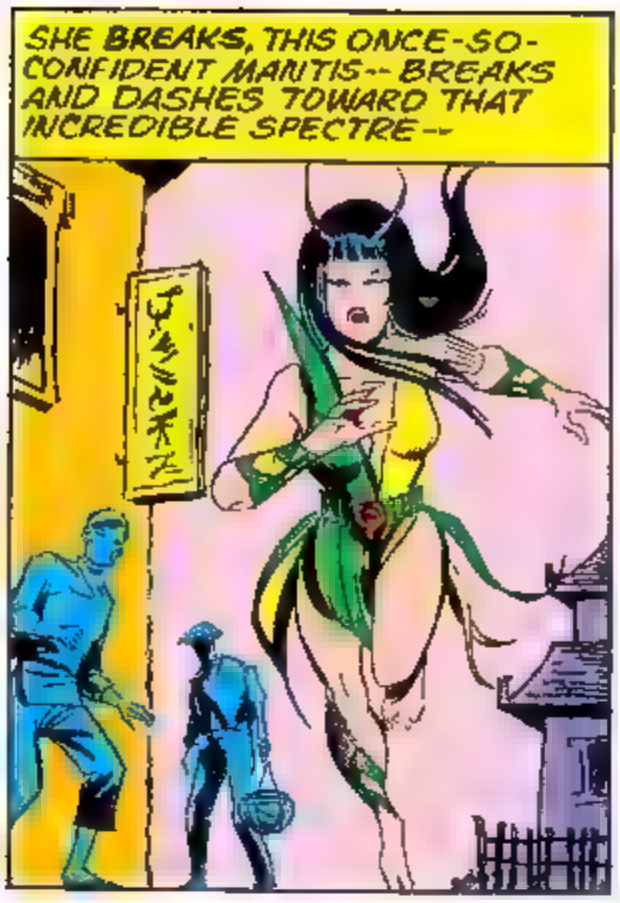
...UNTIL SUDDENLY, BEYOND THE CROWDS THAT THRONG THE SAIGON STREETS...
... HE APPEARS!

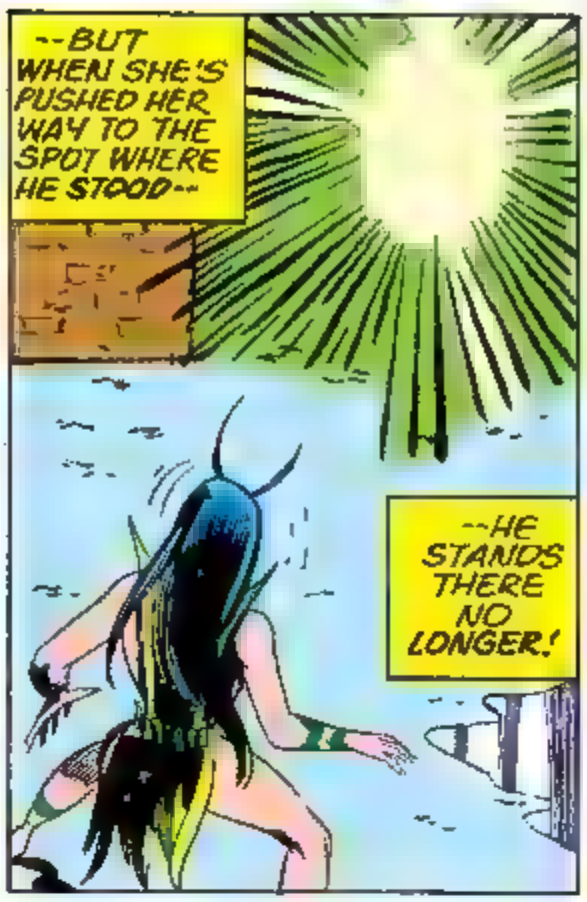

HER JAW LOSES ITS STRENGTH! HER EYES START FROM HER HEAD! "NO!" SHE WHISPERS. "IT CANNOT BE--

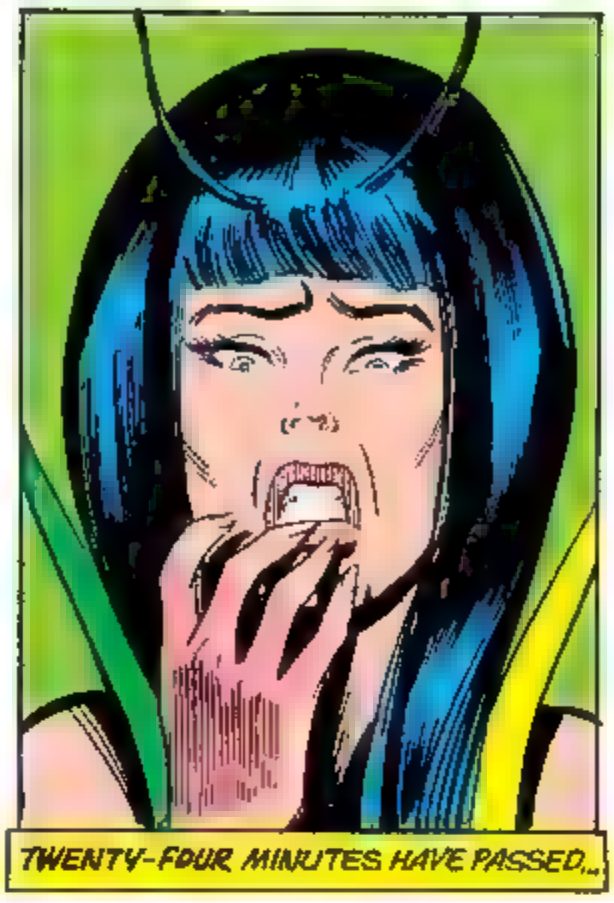
"--NOT THE SWORDSMAN, STANDING THERE SO GRIM AND... GREEN!
"WE BURIED HIM YESTERDAY!!"

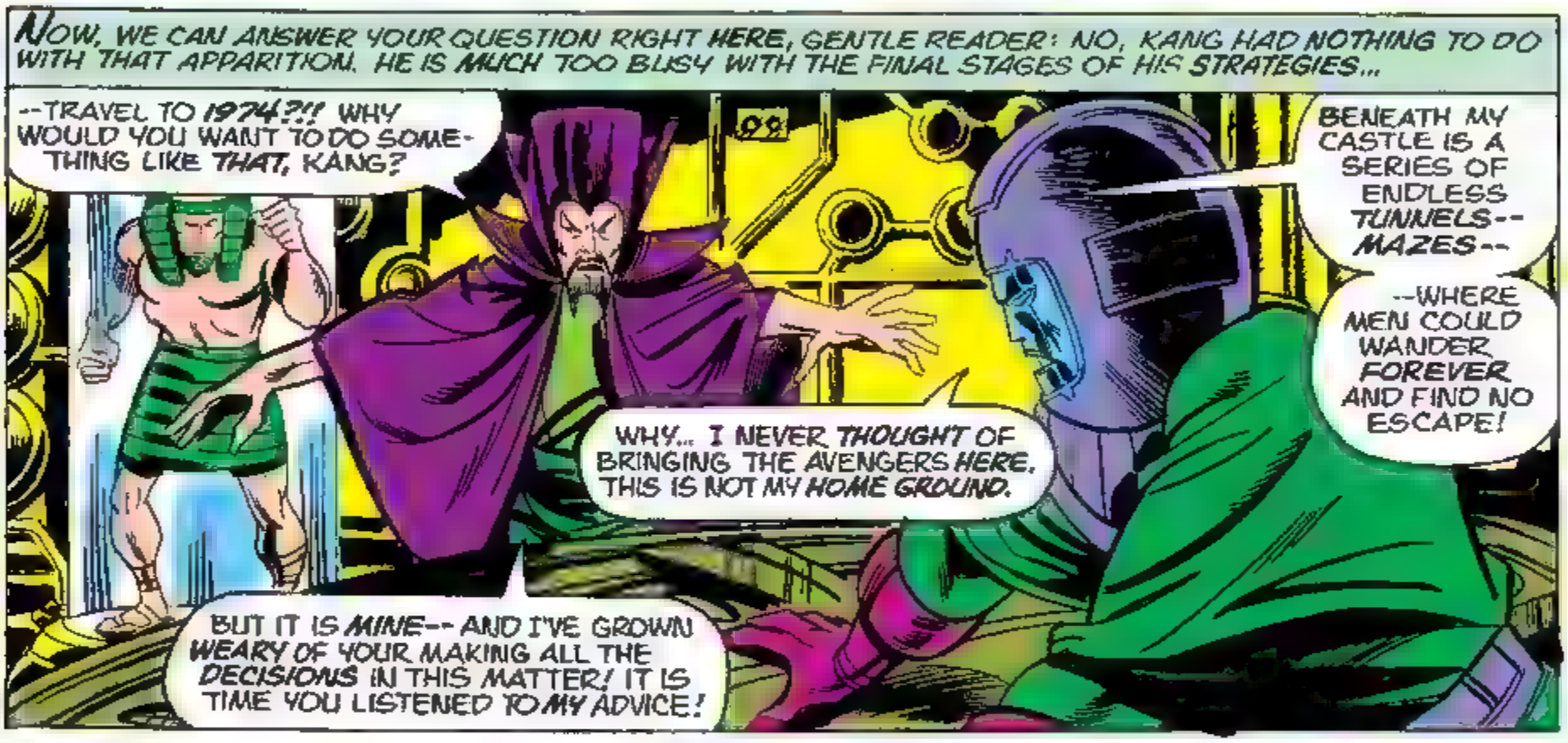
SHE TRIES TO FORCE THE IMAGE FROM HER SIGHT--TRIES TO TELL HERSELF THIS ISN'T HAPPENING--


-- BUT THE MAN SHE ONCE LOVED CONTINUES TO STARE INTO HER HORRIFIED FACE!


SHE BREAKS, THIS ONCE-SO-CONFIDENT MANTIS-- BREAKS AND DASHES TOWARD THAT INCREDIBLE SPECTRE--


--BUT WHEN SHE'S PUSHED HER WAY TO THE SPOT WHERE HE STOOD--
--HE STANDS THERE NO LONGER!

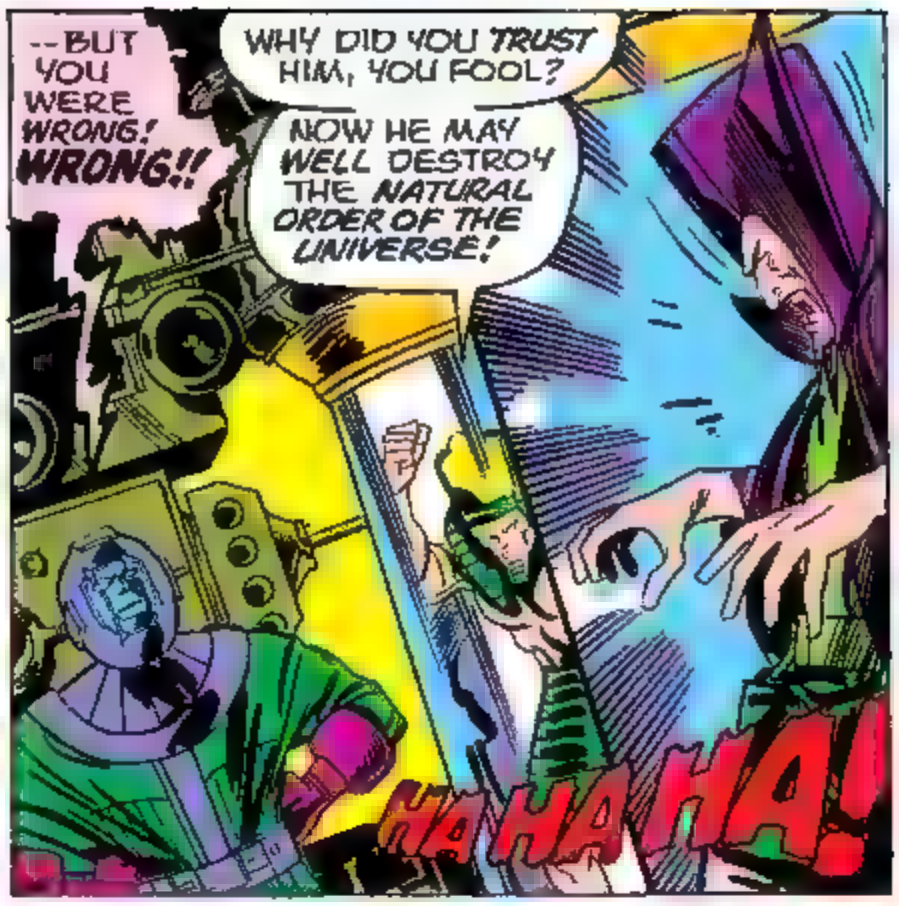

TWENTY-FOUR MINUTES HAVE PASSED...


NOW, WE CAN ANSWER YOUR QUESTION RIGHT HERE, GENTLE READER: NO, KANG HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT APPARITION. HE IS MUCH TOO BUSY WITH THE FINAL STAGES OF HIS STRATEGIES...
--TRAVEL TO 1974?!! WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT, KANG?
BUT IT IS MINE-- AND I'VE GROWN WEARY OF YOUR MAKING ALL THE DECISIONS IN THIS MATTER! IT IS TIME YOU LISTENED TO MY ADVICE!
WHY... I NEVER THOUGHT OF BRINGING THE AVENGERS HERE. THIS IS NOT MY HOME GROUND.
BENEATH MY CASTLE IS A SERIES OF ENDLESS TUNNELS-- MAZES--
--WHERE MEN COULD WANDER FOREVER AND FIND NO ESCAPE!

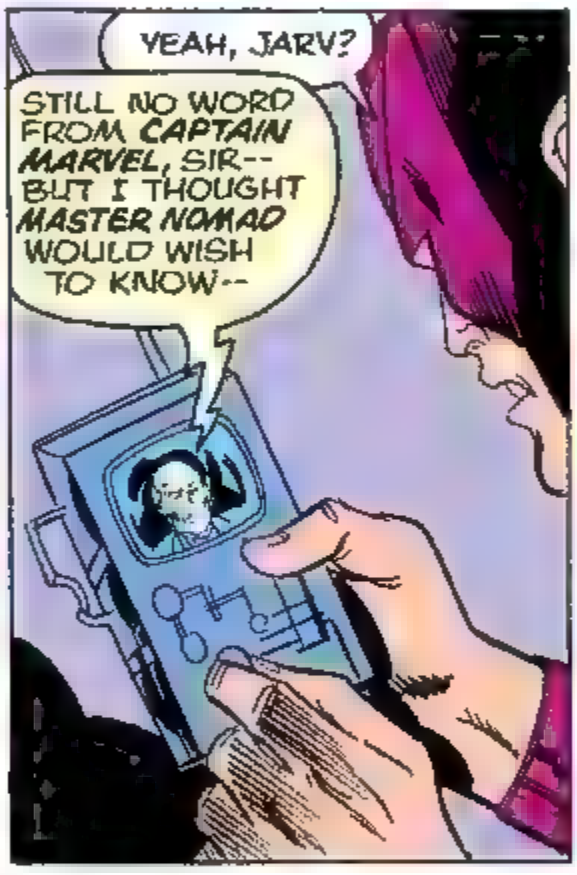
IF YOU WISH TO INSPIRE FEAR AND CONFUSION IN OUR ENEMIES----
YES... YES, THAT SOUNDS EXCELLENT!
IT IS THE FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN I'VE BEEN BUILDING FOR THEM...

... AND FOR YOU, IMMORTUS!
YOU'VE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE AS BLINDLY AS I COULD HAVE HOPED, SO NOW I HAVE NO FURTHER REASON TO LEAVE YOU FREE!
WHAT--?!! YOU DARE--?

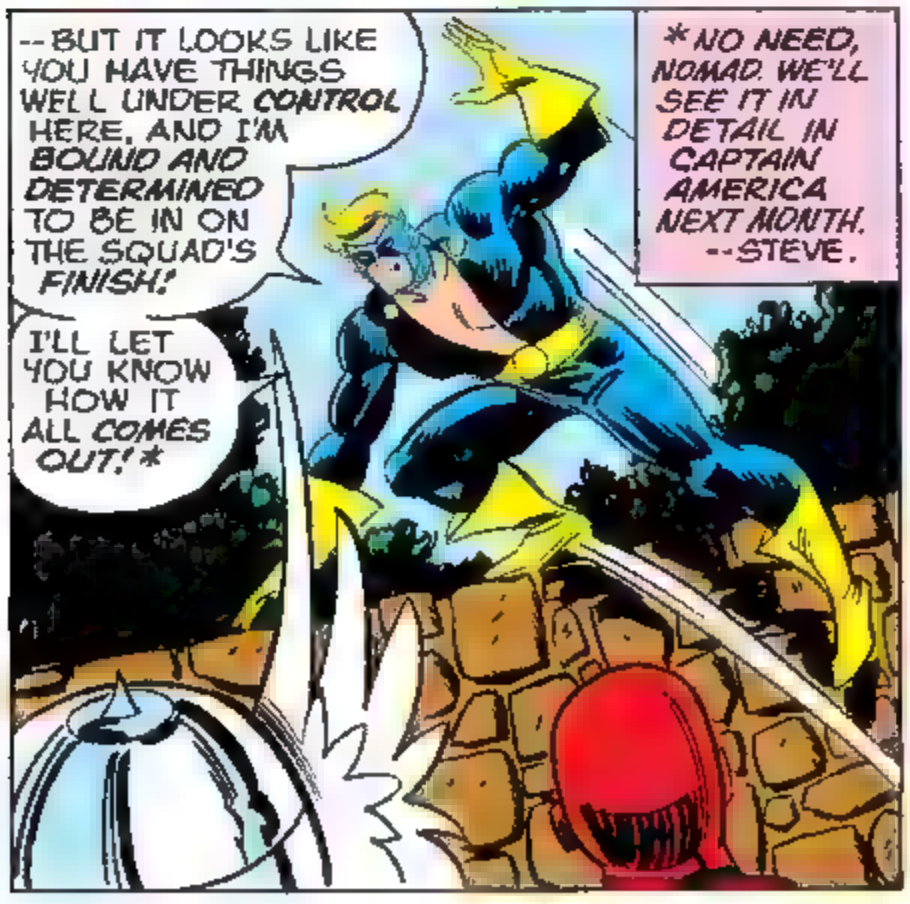
YES, I DARE -- DARE TO TEACH A MAN GROWN FLABBY ENOUGH TO HOLD HIS ATTACKS FOR THE APPEARANCE OF AN ALLY WHAT TRUE WARFARE DEMANDS!
YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE THE MASTER OF TIME!
YOU THOUGHT KANG WOULD CONSENT TO BE A MERE WARLORD IN YOUR COURT--


--BUT YOU WERE WRONG! WRONG!!
WHY DID YOU TRUST HIM, YOU FOOL?
NOW HE MAY WELL DESTROY THE NATURAL ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE!
HA HA HA!

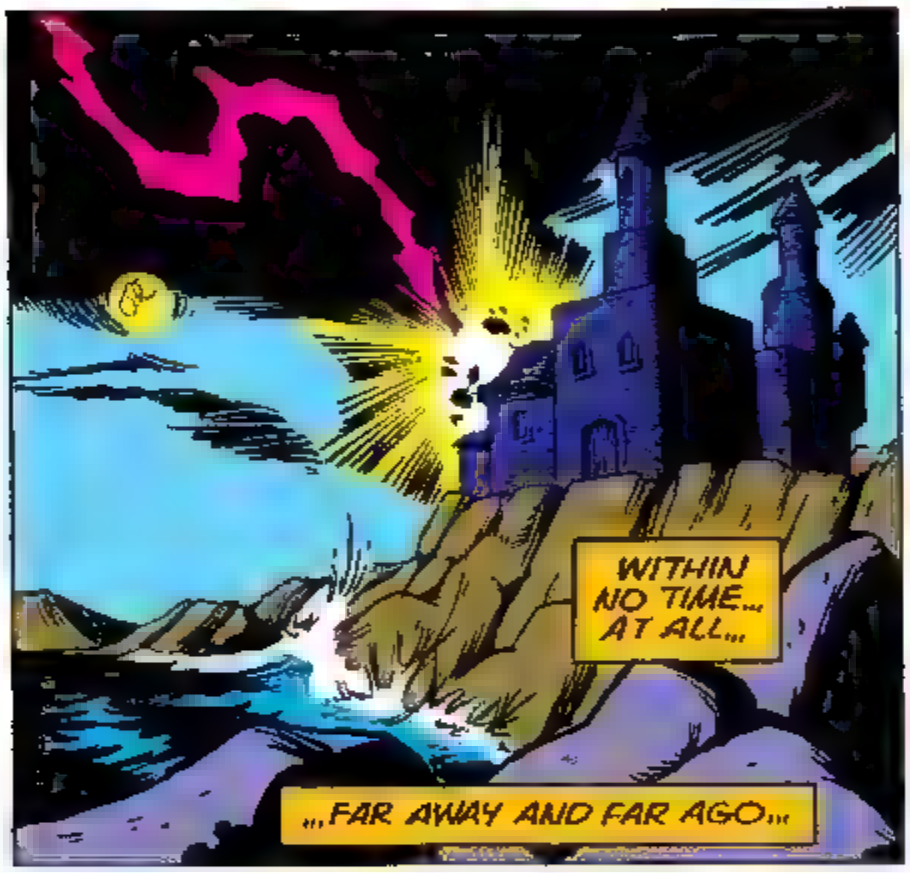
AND WHILE ALL THIS HAS TRANSPIRED FOR THE VILLAINS, 20 MINUTES HAVE GONE IN SAIGON.
BUUUP
HEADS UP, PEOPLE! THAT'S THE RADIO!

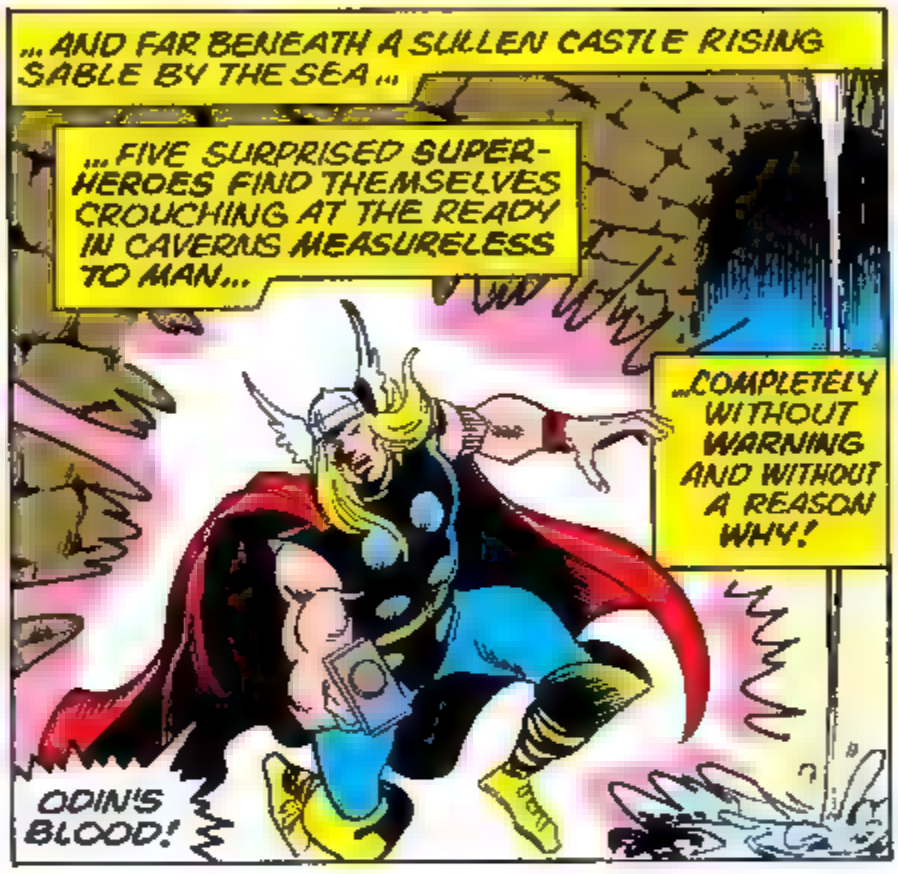

YEAH, JARV?
STILL NO WORD FROM CAPTAIN MARVEL, SIR-- BUT I THOUGHT MASTER NOMAD WOULD WISH TO KNOW--

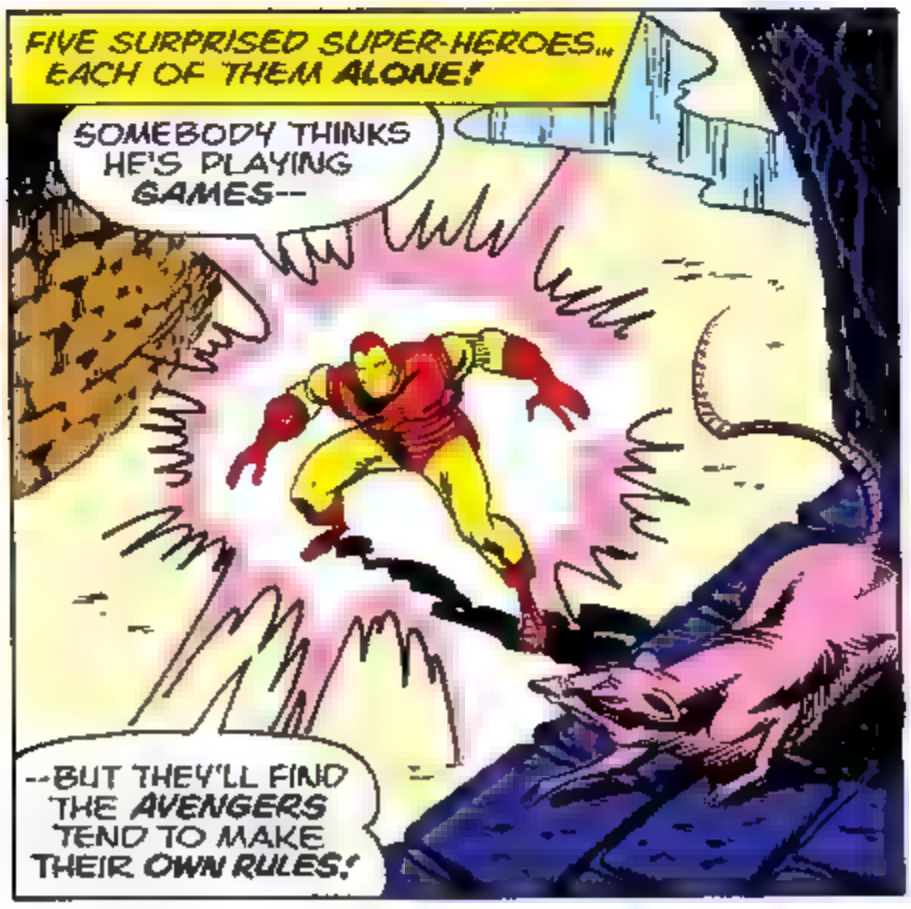
NEWS BULLETINS HERE REPORT THE SERPENT SQUAD HAS BEEN SIGHTED IN LOS ANGELES.
THAT'S MY CUE, GROUP! IT'S BEEN GREAT SEEING YOU ALL AGAIN--

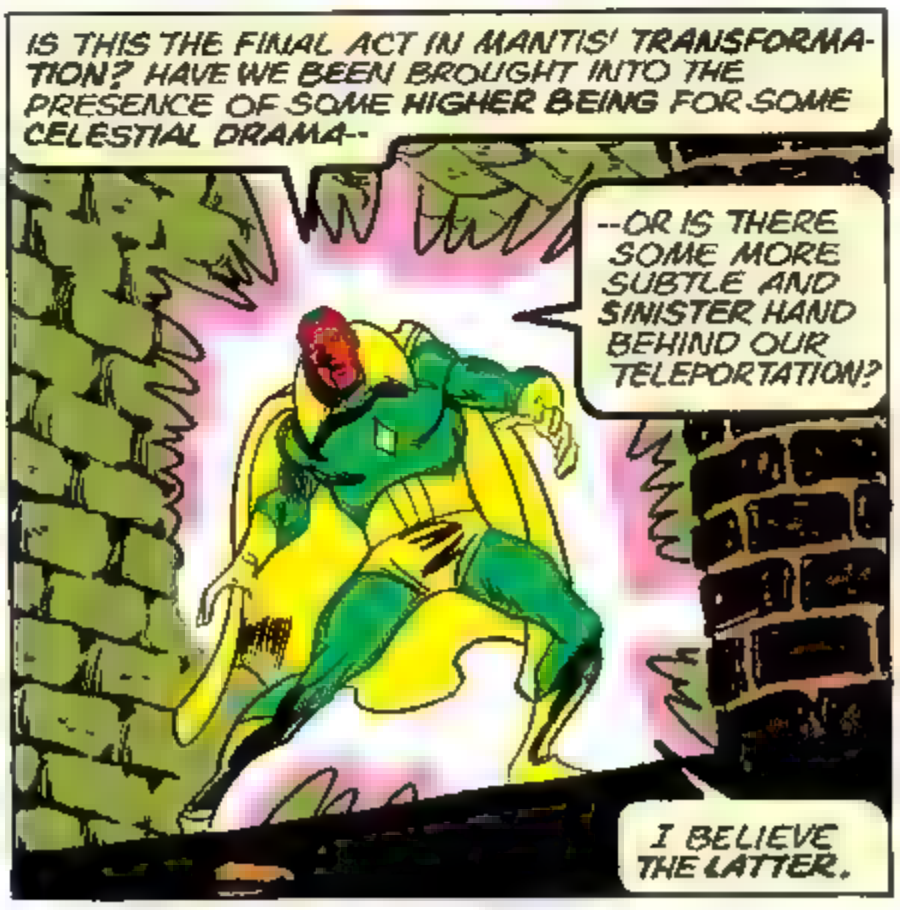

--BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE THINGS WELL UNDER CONTROL HERE, AND I'M BOUND AND DETERMINED TO BE IN ON THE SQUAD'S FINISH!
I'LL LET YOU KNOW HOW IT ALL COMES OUT!*
*NO NEED, NOMAD. WE'LL SEE IT IN DETAIL IN CAPTAIN AMERICA NEXT MONTH. --STEVE.

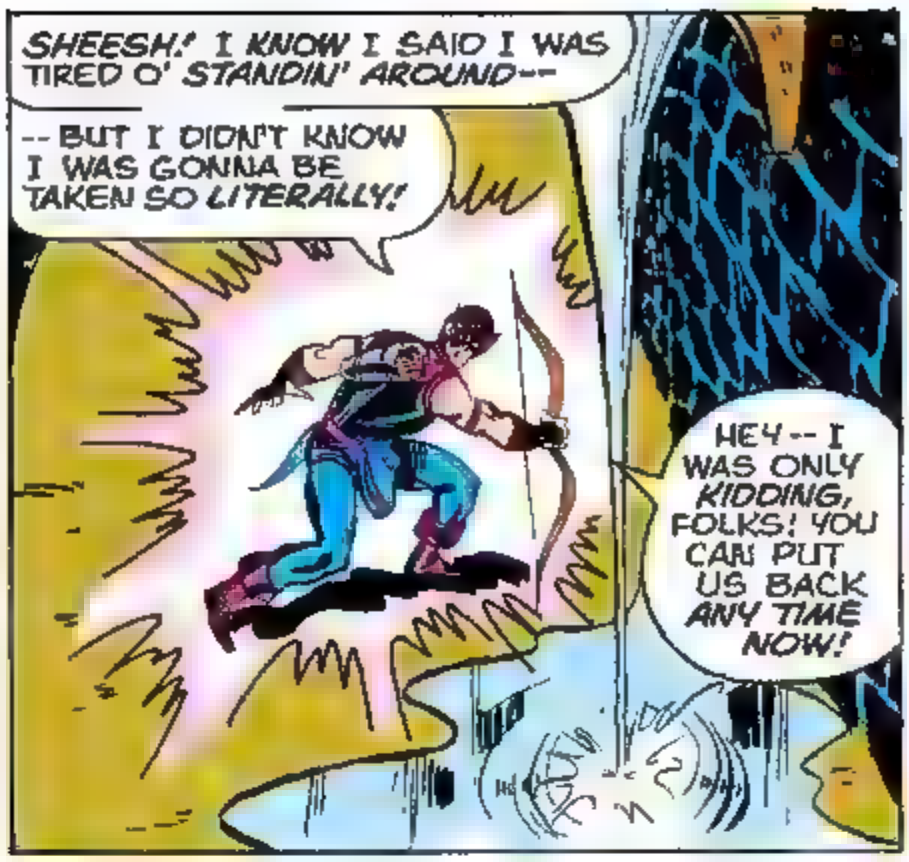
WELL, AT LEAST HE'S GOT SOME ACTION -- WHILE WE STAND AROUND COOLIN' OUR HEELS!
SO NOW WHADDA WE DO?

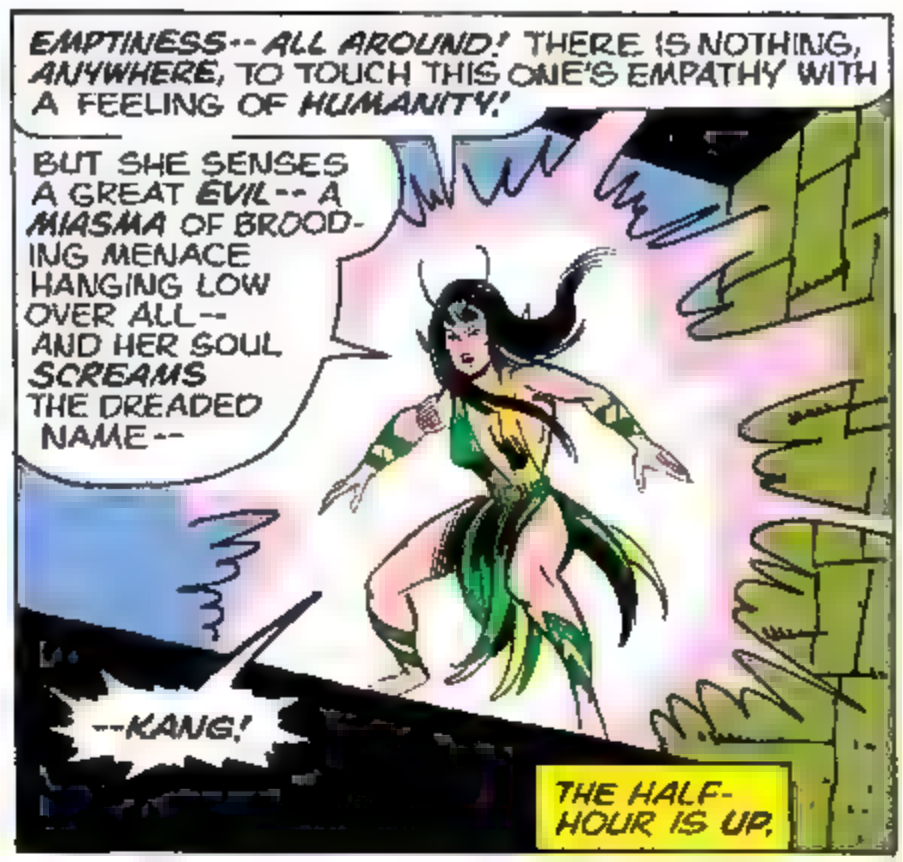

WITHIN NO TIME... AT ALL...
...FAR AWAY AND FAR AGO...

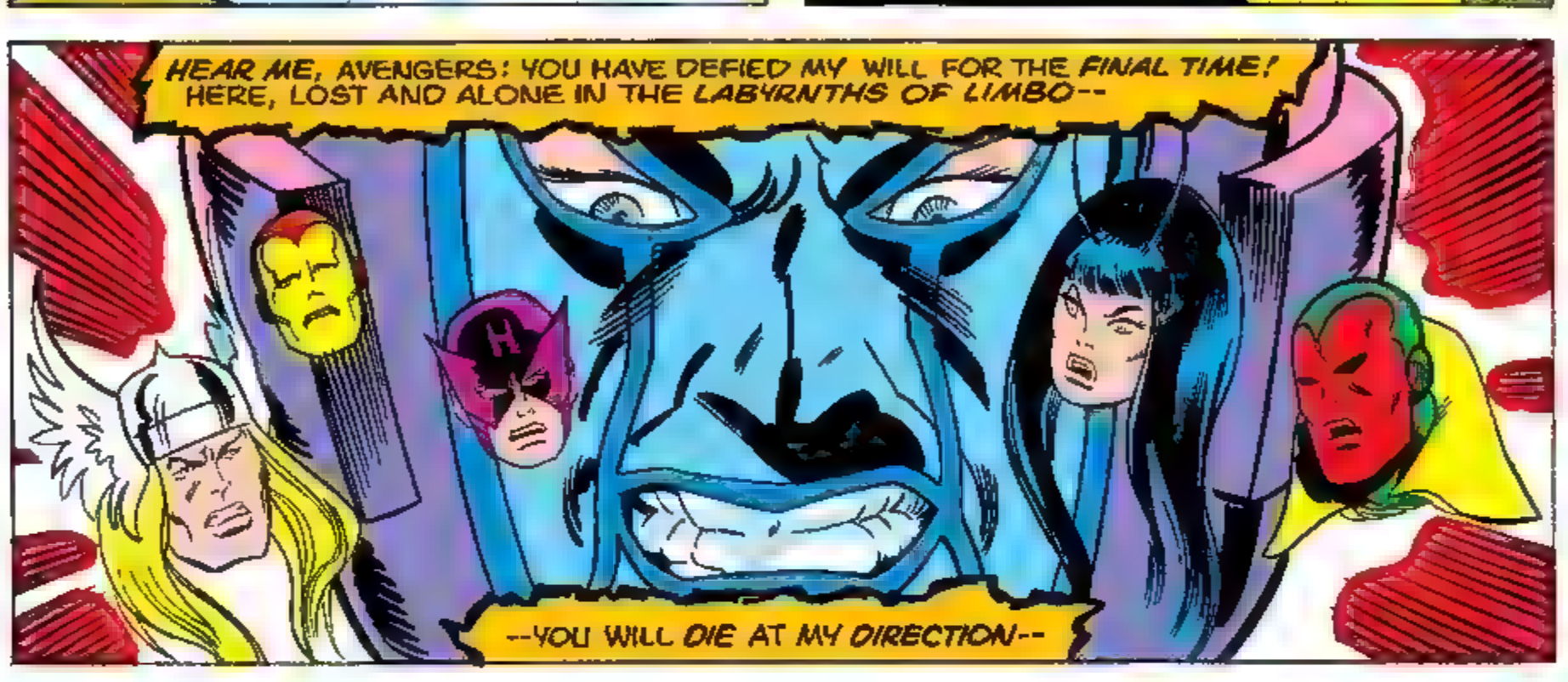

...AND FAR BENEATH A SULLEN CASTLE RISING SABLE BY THE SEA...
...FIVE SURPRISED SUPER-HEROES FIND THEMSELVES CROUCHING AT THE READY IN CAVERNS MEASURELESS TO MAN...
...COMPLETELY WITHOUT WARNING AND WITHOUT A REASON WHY!
ODIN'S BLOOD!


FIVE SURPRISED SUPER-HEROES... EACH OF THEM ALONE!
SOMEBODY THINKS HE'S PLAYING GAMES--
--BUT THEY'LL FIND THE AVENGERS TEND TO MAKE THEIR OWN RULES!


IS THIS THE FINAL ACT IN MANTIS' TRANSFORMATION? HAVE WE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE PRESENCE OF SOME HIGHER BEING FOR SOME CELESTIAL DRAMA--
--OR IS THERE SOME MORE SUBTLE AND SINISTER HAND BEHIND OUR TELEPORTATION?
I BELIEVE THE LATTER.







NEXT MONTH ANOTHER TWO-PART TRIPLE-LENGTH TRIUMPH! AVENGERS #132 & GIANT-SIZED AVENGERS #3! DON'T MISS 'EM!

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
132
FEB
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
WE CAN'T DEFEAT SUPER-FOES WHO HAVE ALREADY DIED!
YET, WE MUST FIGHT ON UNTIL THE END!
ELECTRIFYING ANNOUNCEMENT!
BUT... WHICH ONE?

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!**

KANG WAR II

STEVE ENGLEHART / PLOT & TITLE | ROY THOMAS / SCRIPT & EDITING | SAL BUSCEMA & JOE STATON / ART | JOHN COSTANZA, letterer / PETRA GOLDBERG, colorist

HERE IT IS: THE UNCANNY LEGION OF THE UNLIVING (OR, THE BATTALION FROM BEYOND, TAKE YOUR PICK)!

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: THE GHOST, A.K.A. CAPTAIN VAN STRAATEN, THE FLYING DUTCHMAN -- THE MONSTER MISNAMED FRANKENSTEIN -- THE KUNG-FU MASTER CALLED MIDNIGHT -- THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH -- THE LATE WONDER MAN -- AND THE EARLY BARON ZEMO!

THESE SIX HAVE TWO THINGS IN COMMON. ONE IS THAT THEY'RE ALL DEAD.

THE OTHER IS THAT THEIR BLUE-MASKED LEADER IS --

KANG!

RELEASE IMMORTUS AND ME -- CALL OFF YOUR MISSION OF REVENGE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

NEVER, DOG!

DISGUSTING! THAT I SHOULD SEE THE DAY WHEN THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT... MY OWN OTHER SELF... BECAME A SOFT, SIMPERING WEAKLING!

IT IS NOT WEAKNESS, KANG, TO GROW WEARY UNTO DEATH OF FRUITLESS WARS ...OF EMPTY CONQUEST... OF --

ENOUGH!

MY VERY NAME IS CONQUEROR, AND I'LL NOT HAVE IT SULLIED -- EVEN BY MYSELF!

STAY WHERE YOU BELONG -- LOCKED ALONGSIDE IMMORTUS!

IT WAS HIS WEIRDLING POWER WHICH RAISED THESE SIX SUPER-SLAVES FROM THE DEAD

BUT NOW, I NEED HIM NO LONGER, RAMA-TUT... AND I NEVER NEEDED YOU!

ONWARD -- INTO THE CRYPTS --

-- TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS!!

KANG'S MASTERY IS COMPLETE OVER THOSE CREATURES HE HAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

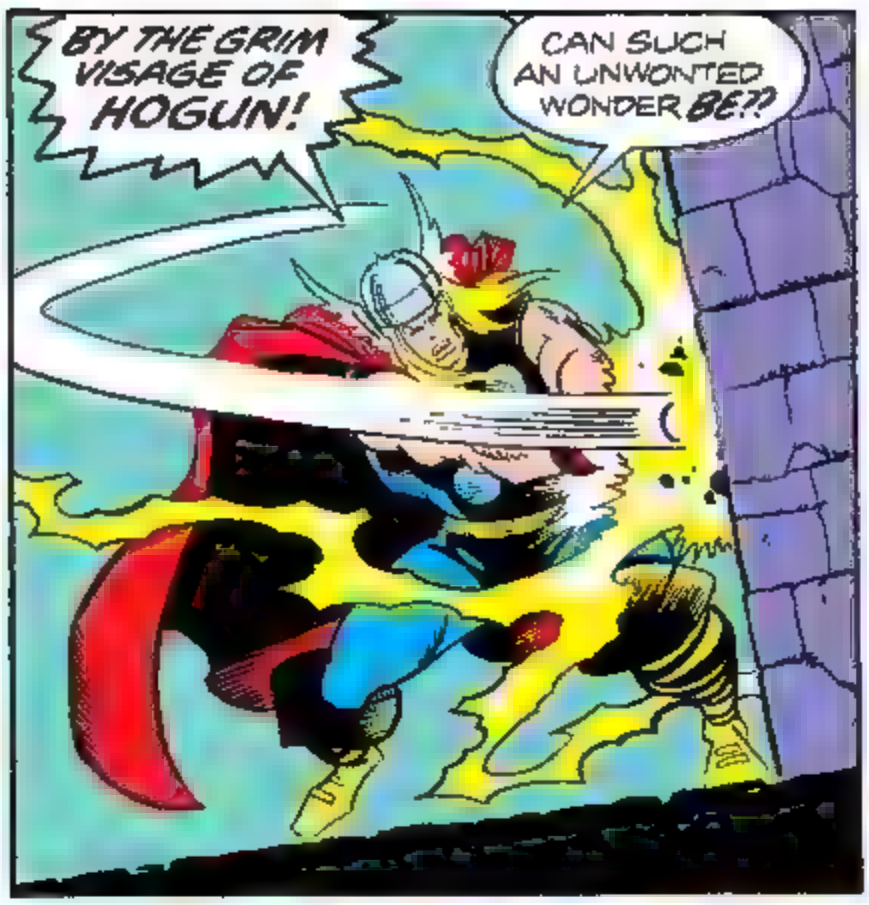
BUT, THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER, SUMMONED FROM THE YEAR 1898, IS NOT DEAD... AT LEAST, NOT IN THE USUAL SENSE...

IT IS THE MANY BODIES OF WHICH HE IS COMPOSED THAT HAVE DIED ...NOT HE!

AND SO, AS KANG'S REVERBERATING SHOUTS GROW MORE DISTANT...

.. SO DO THE MENTAL COMMANDS WITHIN HIS STILL-DAZED BRAIN...

...AND HE WANDERS AWAY, TO PURSUE HIS OWN UNGUESSED-AT DESTINY.


BY THE GRIM VISAGE OF HOGUN!
CAN SUCH AN UNWONTED WONDER BE??

MERE MOMENTS PAST, I STOOD WITH FOUR OTHER AVENGERS IN THE TEEMING STREETS OF SAIGON.
NOW I LANGUISH IN SOME UNKNOWN CORRIDOR, ALONE BUT FOR THE MENTAL RAGE OF KANG, WHICH I FELT AN INSTANT AGONE...
AND EVEN MJOLNIR CANNOT SHATTER THE STONES THAT HEM ME IN!
YET, MAYHAP THERE BE ANOTHER WAY...!

HEAR ME, ALL-FATHER ODIN!
HEAR THY FIRST-BORN, THOR-- WIELDER OF THINE ASGARD-FORGED HAMMER!
SEND STORM-- SEND LIGHTNING-- AND SET FREE THY SON!

NAUGHT.

THEN, IF THE GOD OF THUNDER CANNOT ESCAPE THIS PRISON...
...PERHAPS THAT SAME FATE WILL NOT BE BINDING UPON--
THROOM

--DONALD M. BLAKE, Ph.D!
NO SUCH LUCK, THOUGH, MORTAL OR IMMORTAL, I'M STILL HERE, WHEREVER HERE IS.

THE LABYRINTH OF LIMBO, KANG CALLED IT. AND MAYBE HE WASN'T JUST PHRASE-MAKING.
HOW COULD EVEN A GOD BREAK OUT OF A PLACE-- WHICH ISN'T A PLACE?
HUH?! THAT SOUND BEHIND ME-- LIKE HEAVY, SHUFFLING FEET--!

GOOD LORD IN HEAVEN!!

ODD, ISN'T IT-- THAT, ALTHOUGH DON BLAKE'S ALTER EGO IS A PAGAN THUNDER GOD, IT IS STILL UPON THE DEITY OF HIS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE THAT THE GOOD DOCTOR CALLS IN A MOMENT OF SOUL-SEARING SHOCK.

WE'LL LEAVE IT TO THE RELIGION MAJORS AMONG YOU TO PONDER THAT ONE...

ARRRR

...WHILE WE RECKON THE MOTIVATION OF THE MONSTER WHO HAS BEEN CALLED FORTH, SPEECHLESS, FROM A SHEET OF ICE IN THE FROZEN ARCTIC OF 1898...

...INTO THESE WINDING CORRIDORS WHICH SEEM TO HOLD HIM PRISONER...

...AND TO FACE THIS PUNY HUMAN THING WHICH INSTINCTIVELY LASHES OUT AT HIM WITH A GNARLED WALKING-STICK.

STRANGE, HE THINKS, THAT THE WOOD DOESN'T BREAK AS IT OUGHT...

THAK

BUT, BONES WILL BREAK, IF WOOD WILL NOT...

AND, THOUGH HE HAD NO WISH TO KILL, WHEN FIRST HE STALKED TOWARD THE MAN...

...NOW HE FEELS THE BLOOD-LUST RAGING UP WITHIN HIM, AS IT HAS SO MANY UNREMEMBERED TIMES BEFORE!

IN A MOMENT, THE PUNY HUMAN THING WILL BREATHE NO MORE!

GNNG

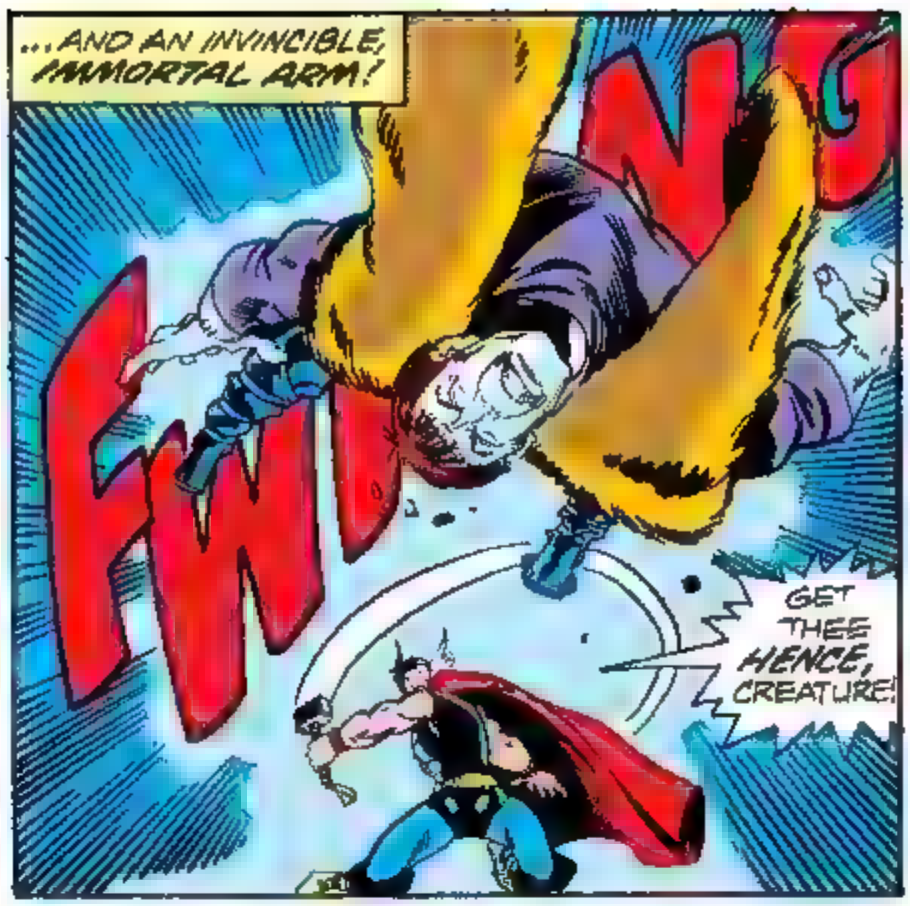
WHAT GOOD, THEN, THE FRAIL HAND WHICH HALTINGLY RAISES THE WOODEN STICK...

...TO SEND IT PLUNGING DOWN AGAIN...

...AGAINST THE COLD STONE FLOOR?

THAK KOOM!

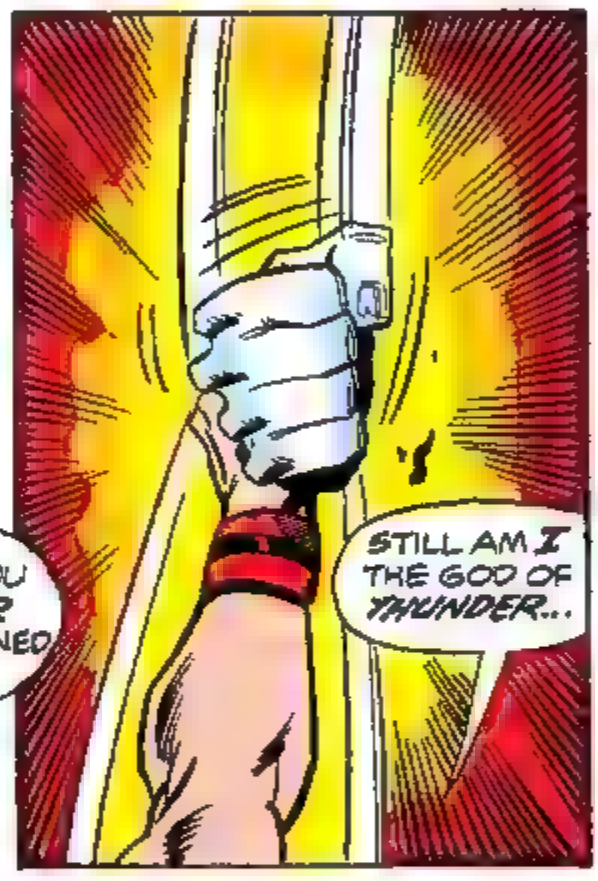
THE ANSWER COMES IN A FLASH OF LIGHT...


...AND AN INVINCIBLE, IMMORTAL ARM!
FWI
GET THEE HENCE, CREATURE!

STILL, IN HIS OWN WAY, THE MONSTER TOO IS IMMORTAL...
...AND SO, INSTEAD OF BEING STRUCK UNCONSCIOUS BY THE FORCE WITH WHICH HE SLAMS AGAINST THE NETHER WALL...
WU

...IS MERELY CONFUSED, AT FIRST, BY THE NEWCOMER'S MIGHT...

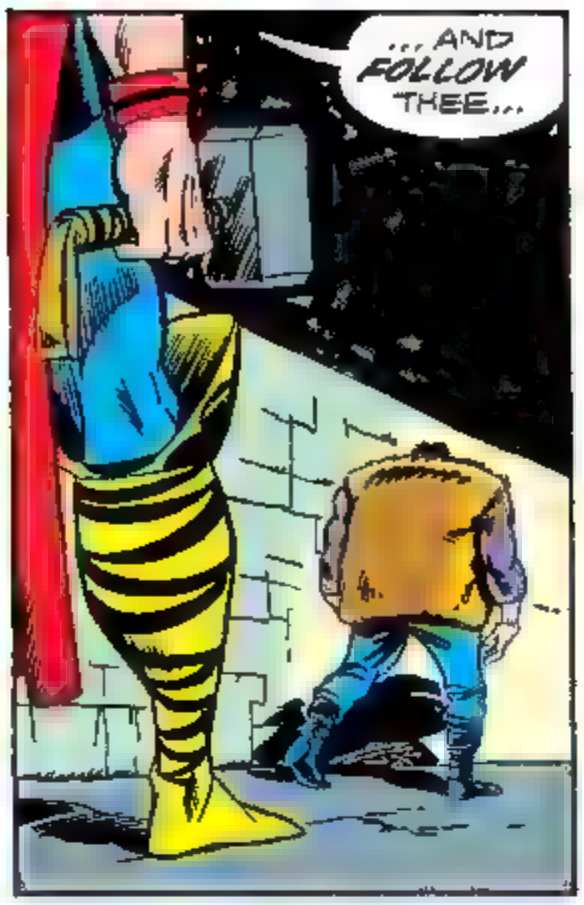
...CONFUSED, AND THEN ANGERED...!
RR
IN SOOTH, MONSTER, THOU ART A POWER TO BE RECKONED WITH.


STILL AM I THE GOD OF THUNDER...

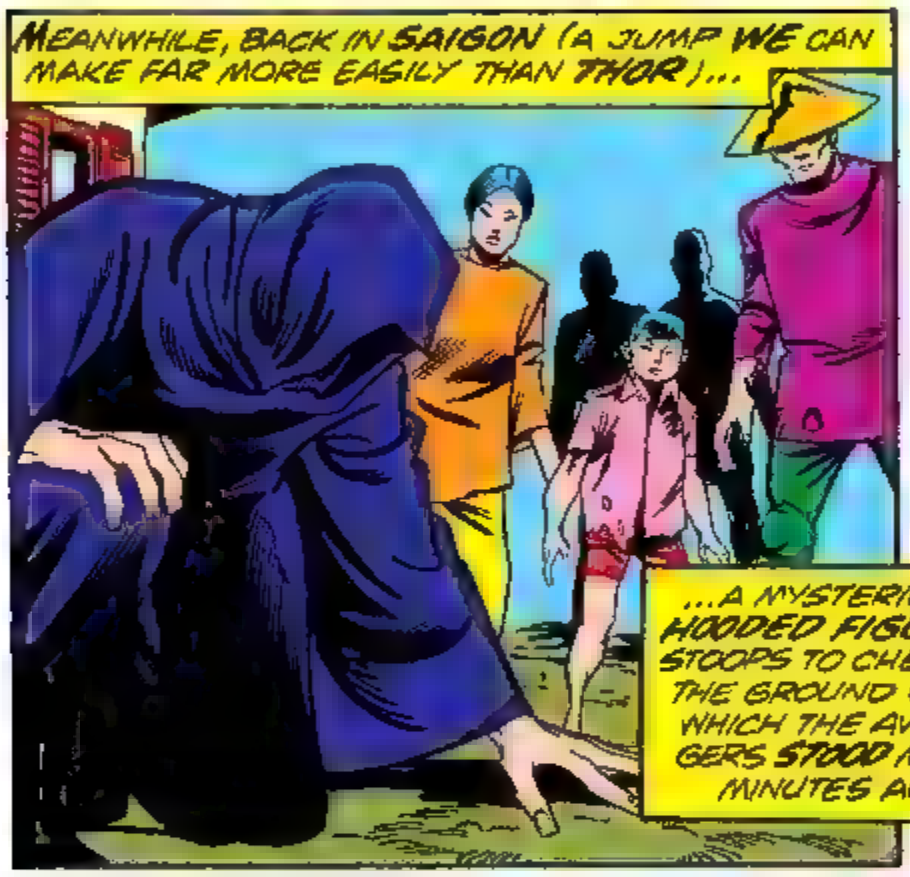
...WHILST THOU ART... WHO??
CLEARLY, THOU ART A MUTE--YET POSSESSED OF MORE SHEER BRUTISH STRENGTH THAN I HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN MANY A DAY.
MORE: THOU HAST STITCHES ON HEAD AND HANDS, AS IF THOU WERT A THING OF PATCHWORK, MUCH LIKE--

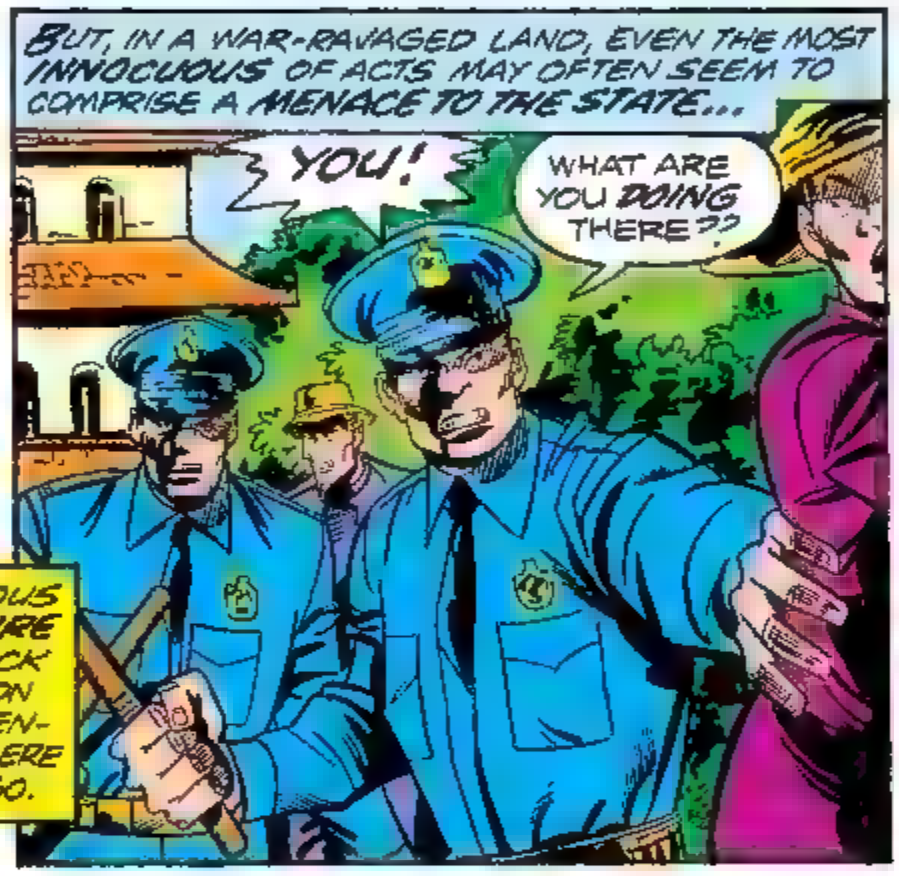
BUT--NO! SURELY, THAT WHICH DOTH CROSS MY MIND IS MADNESS BEYOND COMPARE!
THOU ART A FELLOW WAYFARER IN THIS DREAD PLACE, AS MUCH A PAWN AS I.
YET, IF NAUGHT MAY BE LEARNED BY QUESTIONING THEE...

...THEN PERHAPS MINE ONLY CHOICE IS TO SET THEE FREE...


...AND FOLLOW THEE...

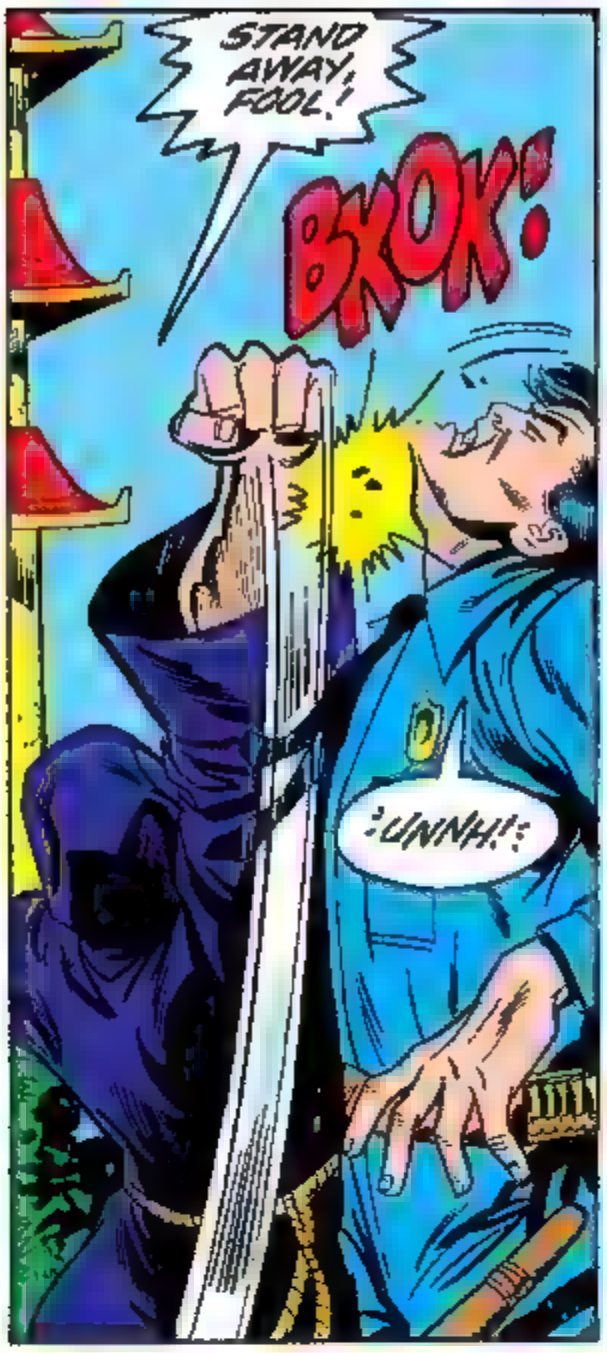
...TILL I LEARN WHAT BASE VILLAIN HATH RIPPED US BOTH UN-TIMELY FROM THE EARTH WE KNEW...
...AND PLUNGED US INTO A WORLD OF CATACOMBS MADE!


MEANWHILE, BACK IN SAIGON (A JUMP WE CAN MAKE FAR MORE EASILY THAN THOR)...
...A MYSTERIOUS HOODED FIGURE STOOPS TO CHECK THE GROUND ON WHICH THE AVENGERS STOOD MERE MINUTES AGO.


BUT, IN A WAR-RAVAGED LAND, EVEN THE MOST INNOCUOUS OF ACTS MAY OFTEN SEEM TO COMPRISE A MENACE TO THE STATE...
YOU!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE??

NO ANSWER, EH?
THEN PERHAPS YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE REASON WE ARE HERE...
...THE COSTUMED AMERICANS WHO ARE SAID TO HAVE VANISHED FROM THIS VERY SPOT!

SO! IF YOU WILL NOT SPEAK, THEN YOU WILL PLEASE COME WITH--
WEN-LAI! HE SEEKS TO BREAK MY GRIP!
STRIKE HIM DOWN!


STAND AWAY, FOOL!
BKOK!
:UNNH!:

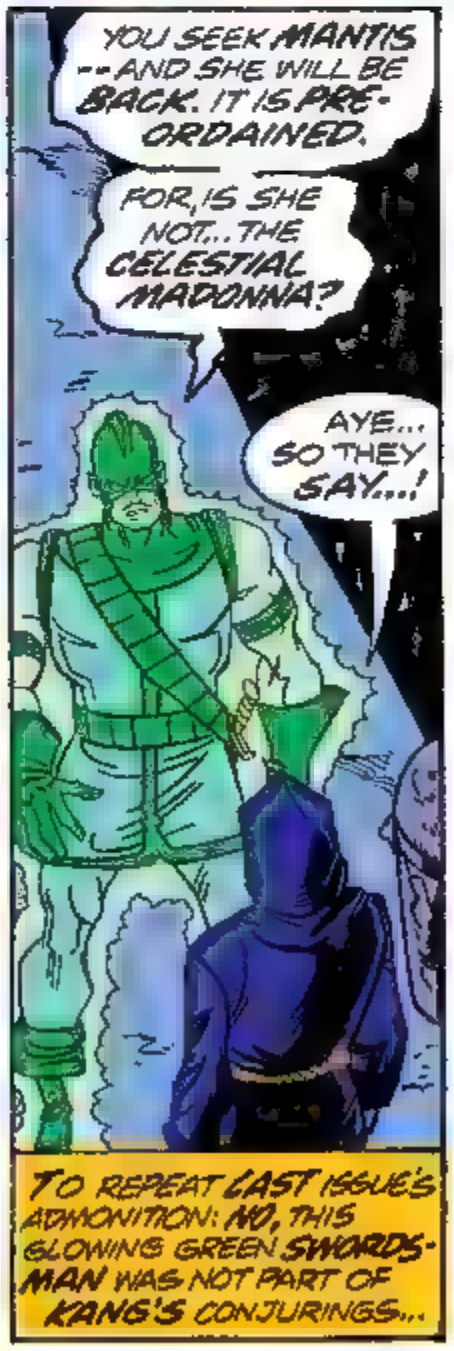
I HAVE NO TIME TO TRIFLE WITH THE LIKES OF YOU
THAM!

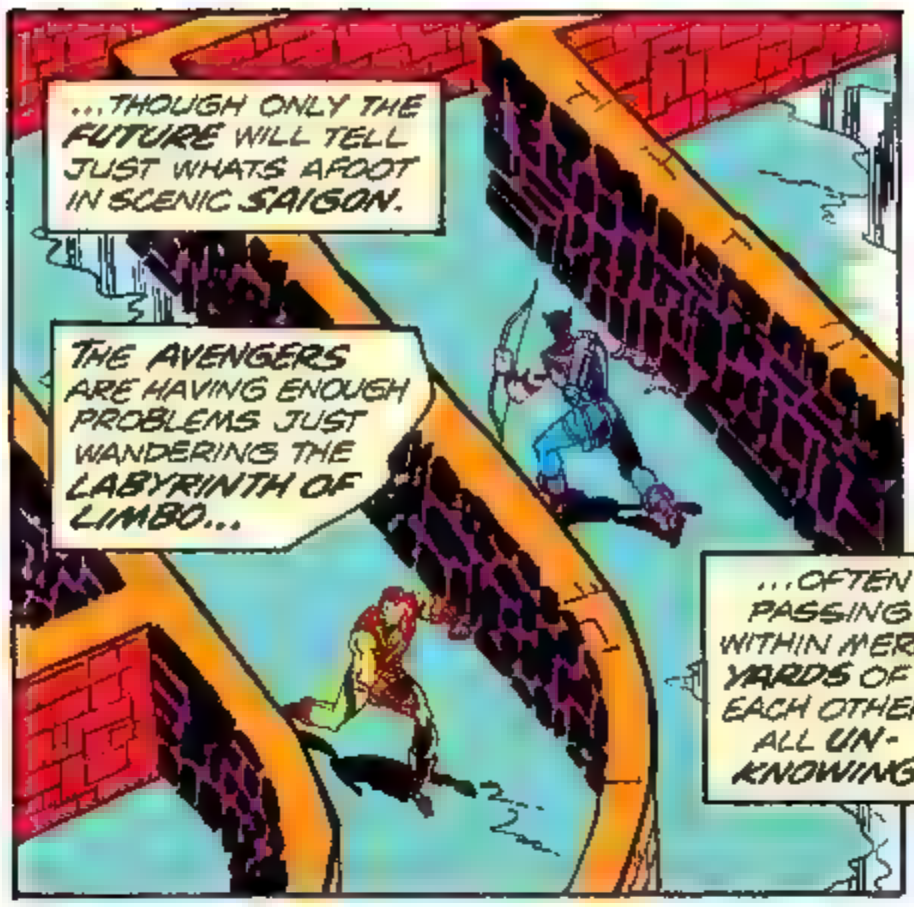
NO TIME AT ALL!
WITH A SPEED WHICH BELIES HIS CLINGING ROBES, THE HOODED FORM RACES TOWARD A NEARBY ALLEYWAY...

...WHERE HE MAY BE SAFE, AT LEAST FOR A TIME, FROM PRYING EYES.

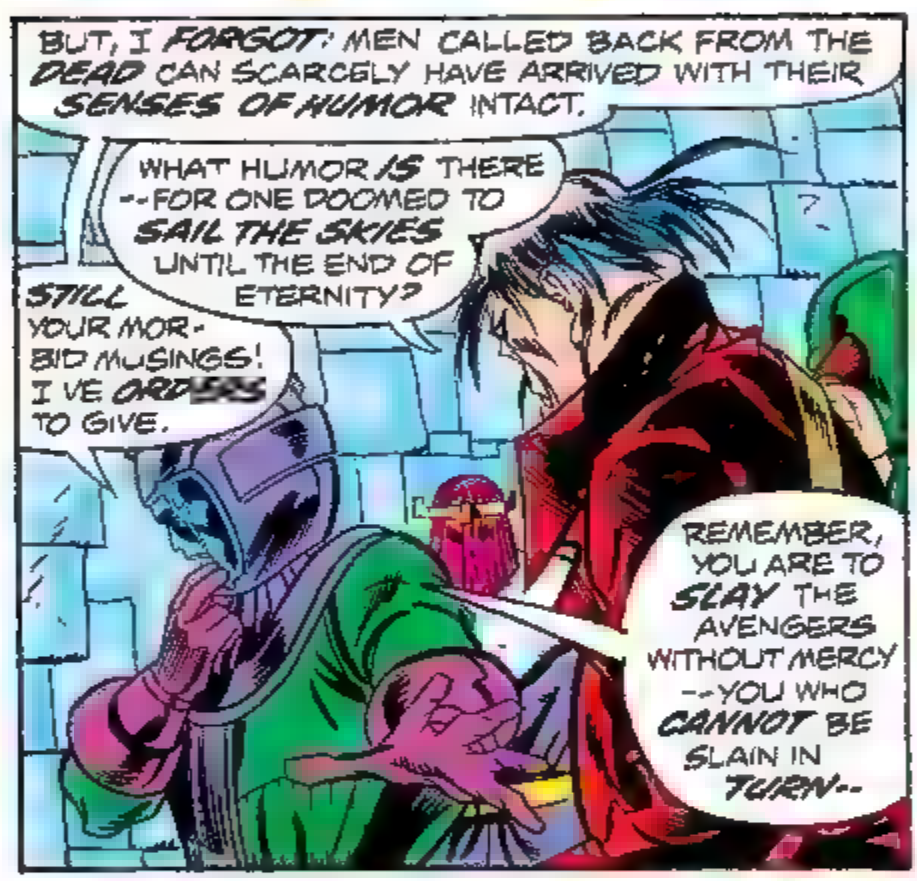
THERE, PLACING HAND TO FOREHAND, HE STANDS IN AWESOME, AGONIZED CONCENTRATION FOR LONG MINUTES, UNTIL--
THEN, IT WAS YOU WHO CALLED--!

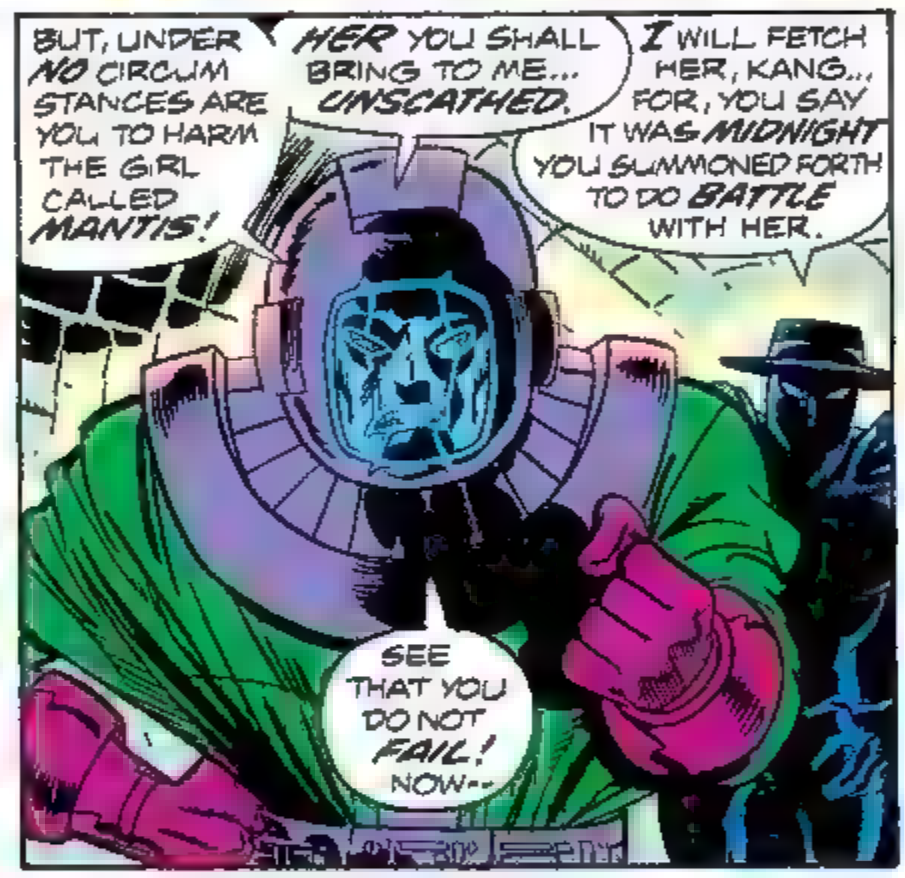
YES--AND YOU WHO ANSWERED--AND EVEN THE SHACKLES OF YOUR DEATH COULD NOT PREVENT YOU.
YOU CALLED. I CAME. IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.
I KNOW WHY YOU CALLED, ALSO... AND YOU NEED NOT WORRY.


YOU SEEK MANTIS --AND SHE WILL BE BACK. IT IS PRE-ORDAINED.
FOR, IS SHE NOT... THE CELESTIAL MADONNA?
AYE... SO THEY SAY...!
TO REPEAT LAST ISSUE'S ADMONITION: NO, THIS GLOWING GREEN SWORDSMAN WAS NOT PART OF KANG'S CONJURINGS...


...THOUGH ONLY THE FUTURE WILL TELL JUST WHAT'S AFOOT IN SCENIC SAIGON.
THE AVENGERS ARE HAVING ENOUGH PROBLEMS JUST WANDERING THE LABYRINTH OF LIMBO...
...OFTEN PASSING WITHIN MERE YARDS OF EACH OTHER, ALL UN-KNOWING...

...AND DESTINED FOR A VIOLENT RENDEZVOUS WITH KANG'S DEAD AND DEADLY LEGION...
MASTER! THE MONSTER OF MARY SHELLEY IS NO LONGER WITH US.
NO MATTER, WE WILL FIND HIM IN NO TIME...
...ESPECIALLY SINCE THIS IS A LAND WHERE TIME DOES NOT EXIST.


BUT, I FORGOT: MEN CALLED BACK FROM THE DEAD CAN SCARCELY HAVE ARRIVED WITH THEIR SENSES OF HUMOR INTACT.
WHAT HUMOR IS THERE --FOR ONE DOOMED TO SAIL THE SKIES UNTIL THE END OF ETERNITY?
STILL YOUR MOR-BID MUSINGS! I'VE ORDERS TO GIVE.
REMEMBER, YOU ARE TO SLAY THE AVENGERS WITHOUT MERCY --YOU WHO CANNOT BE SLAIN IN TURN--


BUT, UNDER NO CIRCUM STANCES ARE YOU TO HARM THE GIRL CALLED MANTIS!
HER YOU SHALL BRING TO ME... UNSCATHED.
I WILL FETCH HER, KANG... FOR, YOU SAY IT WAS MIDNIGHT YOU SUMMONED FORTH TO DO BATTLE WITH HER.
SEE THAT YOU DO NOT FAIL! NOW--

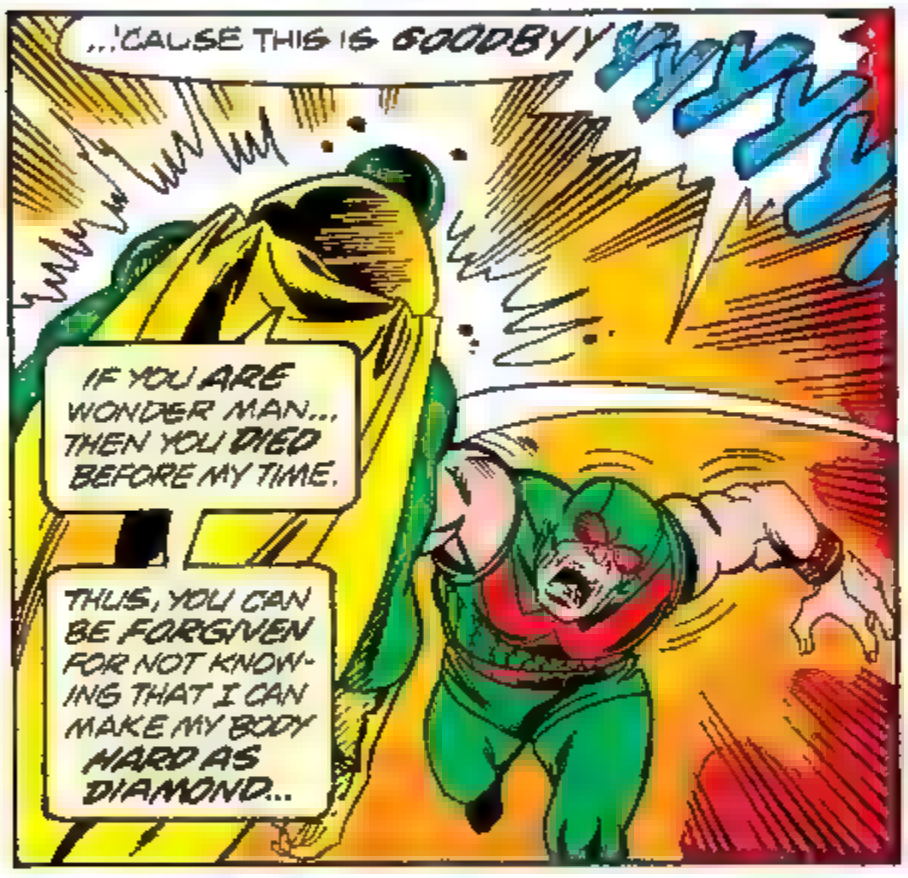
WAIT! DOWN HERE, MASTER-- IS THIS ONE OF THOSE YOU SEEK?
I DO NOT RECALL HIM FROM MY OWN SOJOURN ON EARTH... BUT HE HAS THE LOOK OF THE ACCURSED AVENGERS ABOUT HIM!
EH?

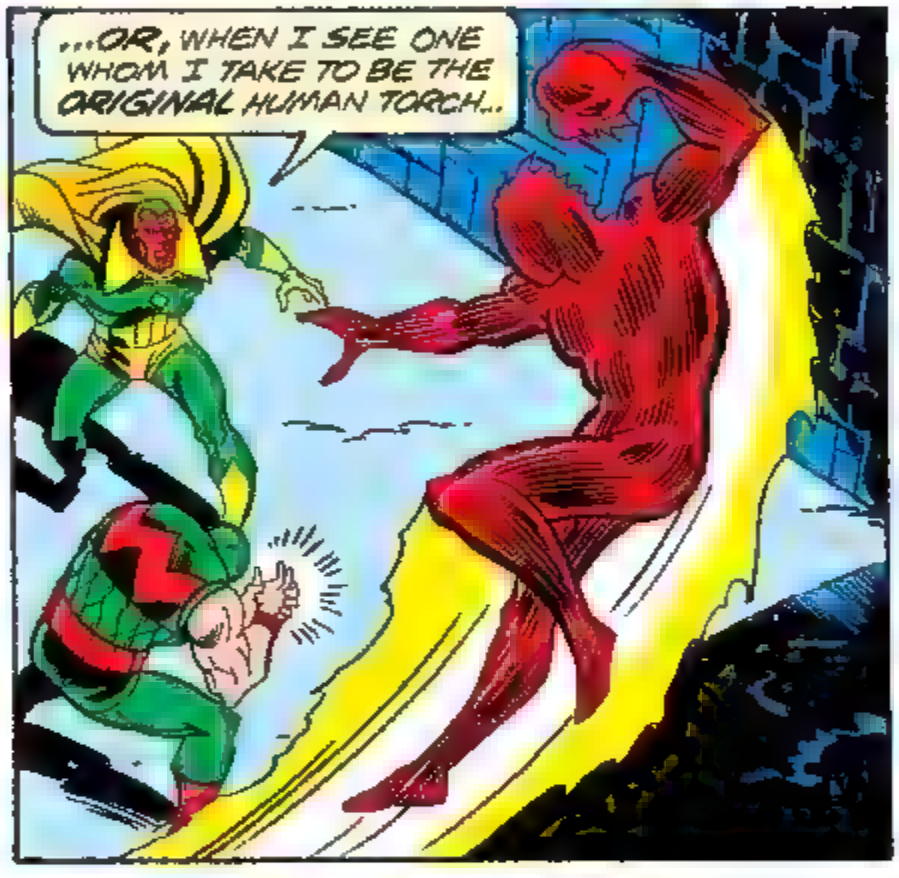
KANG! AFTER OUR RECENT ENCOUNTER, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU WERE BEHIND THIS!
SOON YOU WILL KNOW NOTHING... EVER AGAIN!
WONDER MAN! HUMAN TORCH!
DESTROY HIM-- NOW!!

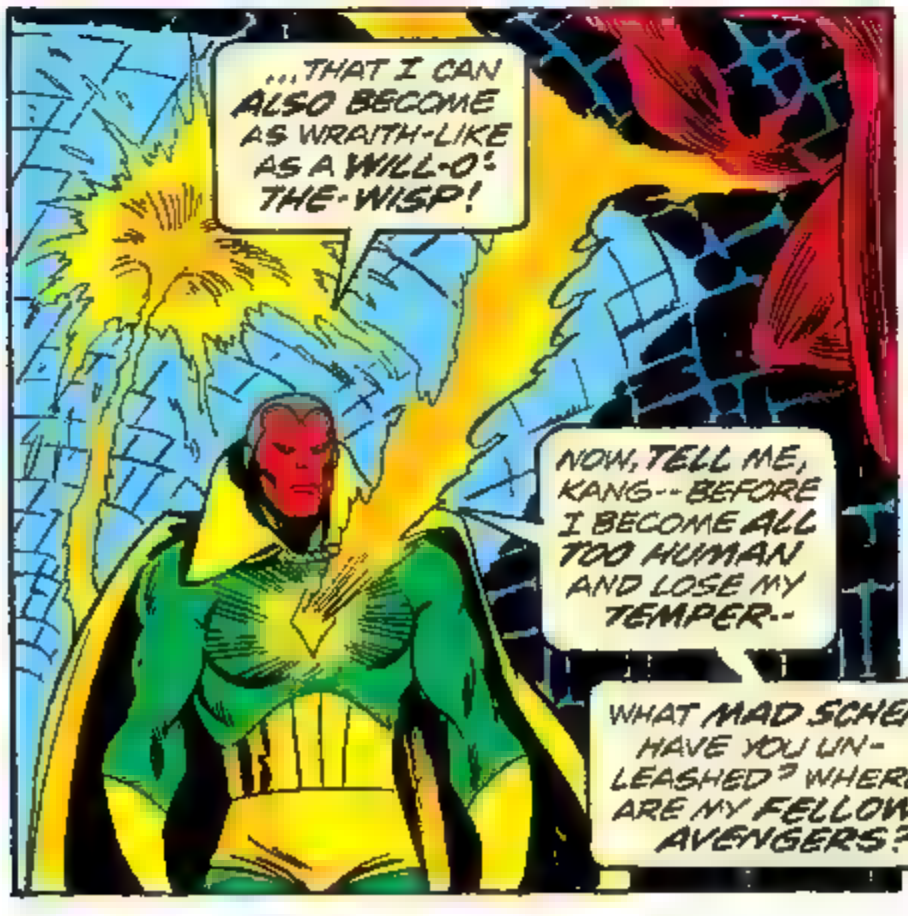
DON'T KNOW--WHY WE MUST ATTACK--BUT CAN'T RESIST--HIS COMMANDS!
THAT'S THE GOOD THING, TORCH E, ABOUT REFORMING ONLY A FEW SECONDS BEFORE YOU DIED LIKE I DID.
TO WONDER MAN, IT'S GONNA COME A LOT EASIER!

WONDER MAN! EVEN AMID THE SHOCK OF RECOGNITION, THE VISION CANNOT FORGET THAT IT WAS THE BRAIN-PATTERNS OF WONDER MAN--SIMON WILLIAMS--WHICH FORMED THE BASIS OF HIS OWN ANDROID MIND.
SMALL WONDER, THEN, THAT HE STOPS SHORT...

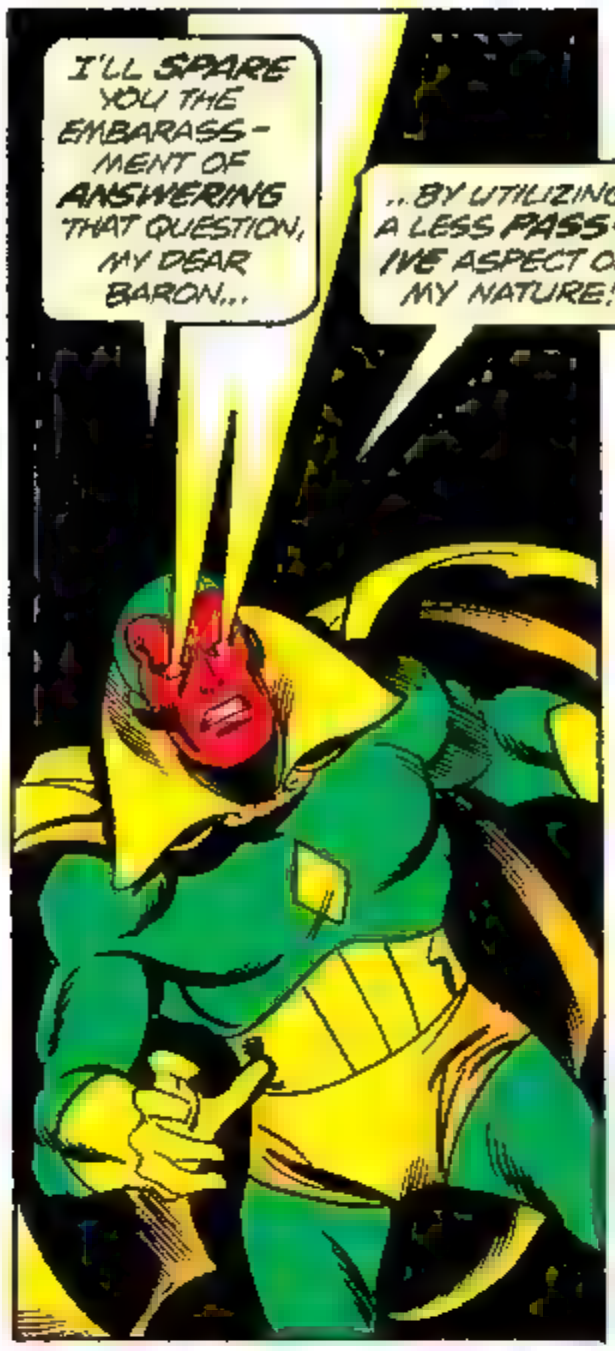
...EVEN AS THE BEGOGGLED SPECTRE FASHIONS A CRUDE BUT POWERFUL HAYMAKER!
SAY SO LONG TO YOUR OLD BUDDY KANG, REDSKIN...


...'CAUSE THIS IS GOODBYY
IF YOU ARE WONDER MAN... THEN YOU DIED BEFORE MY TIME.
THUS, YOU CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR NOT KNOWING THAT I CAN MAKE MY BODY HARD AS DIAMOND...

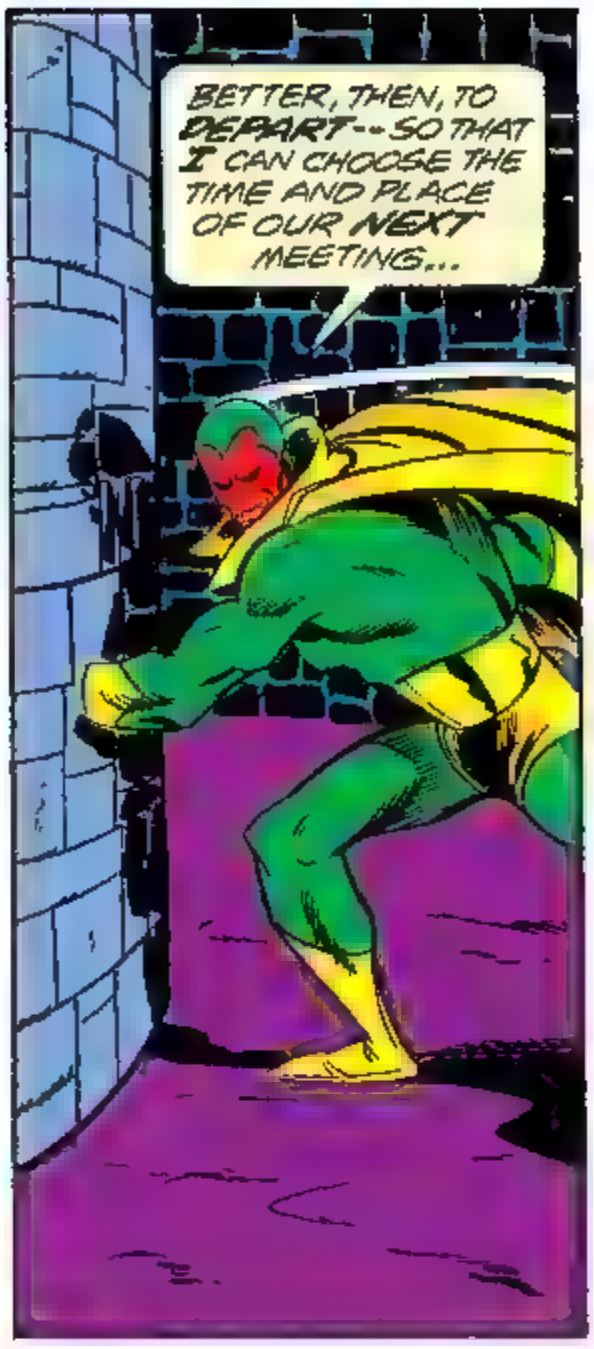

...OR, WHEN I SEE ONE WHOM I TAKE TO BE THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH...


...THAT I CAN ALSO BECOME AS WRAITH-LIKE AS A WILL-O'-THE-WISP!
NOW, TELL ME, KANG--BEFORE I BECOME ALL TOO HUMAN AND LOSE MY TEMPER--
WHAT MAD SCHEME HAVE YOU UNLEASHED? WHERE ARE MY FELLOW AVENGERS?

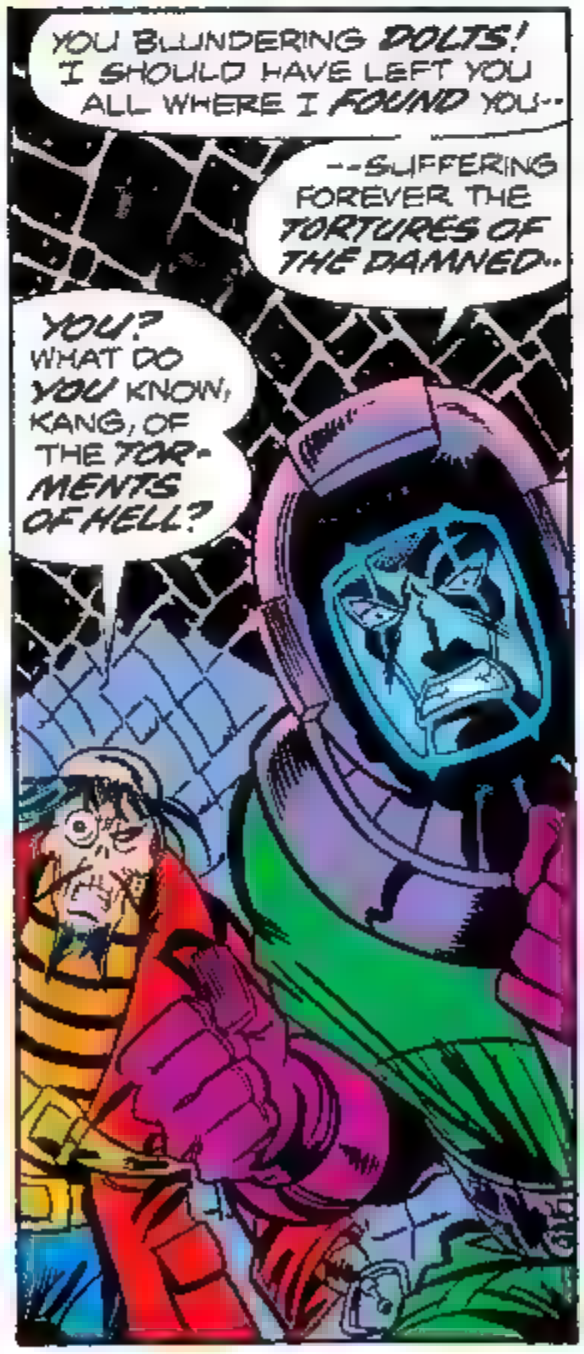
YOU'LL GREET THEM IN WHATEVER ANDROID HELL THERE IS--AND NOWHERE ELSE!
ZEMO! VAN STRAATEN!
KILL HIM! KILL HIM!!
WE OBEY, MASTER
WERE ALL NAZIS AS SUBSERVIENT AS YOU, ZEMO, WHEN THEY COULD NOT BULLY THEIR WAY TO POWER?


I'LL SPARE YOU THE EMBARASS-MENT OF ANSWERING THAT QUESTION, MY DEAR BARON...
..BY UTILIZING A LESS PASS-IVE ASPECT OF MY NATURE!

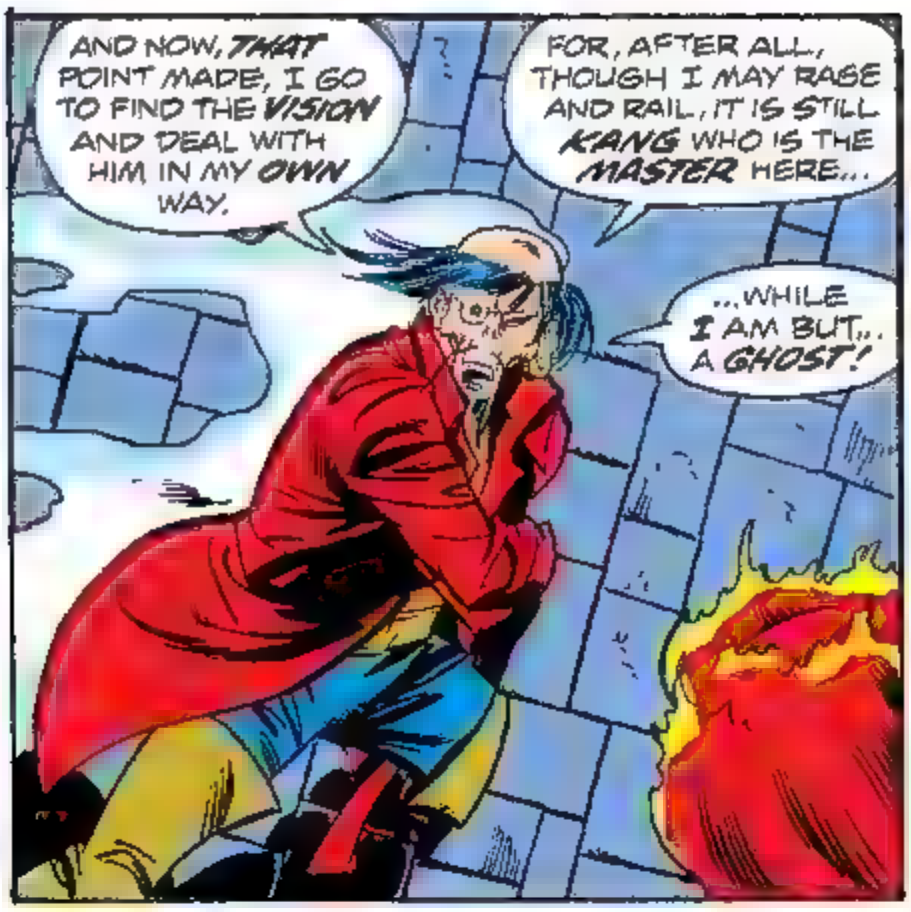
FZZZZZ
AMAZING! I CAN STUN YOU--YET YOU ABSORB MY SOLAR ENERGY-BLASTS...
AND TO CONTINUE THE BARRAGE WOULD WEAKEN ME.

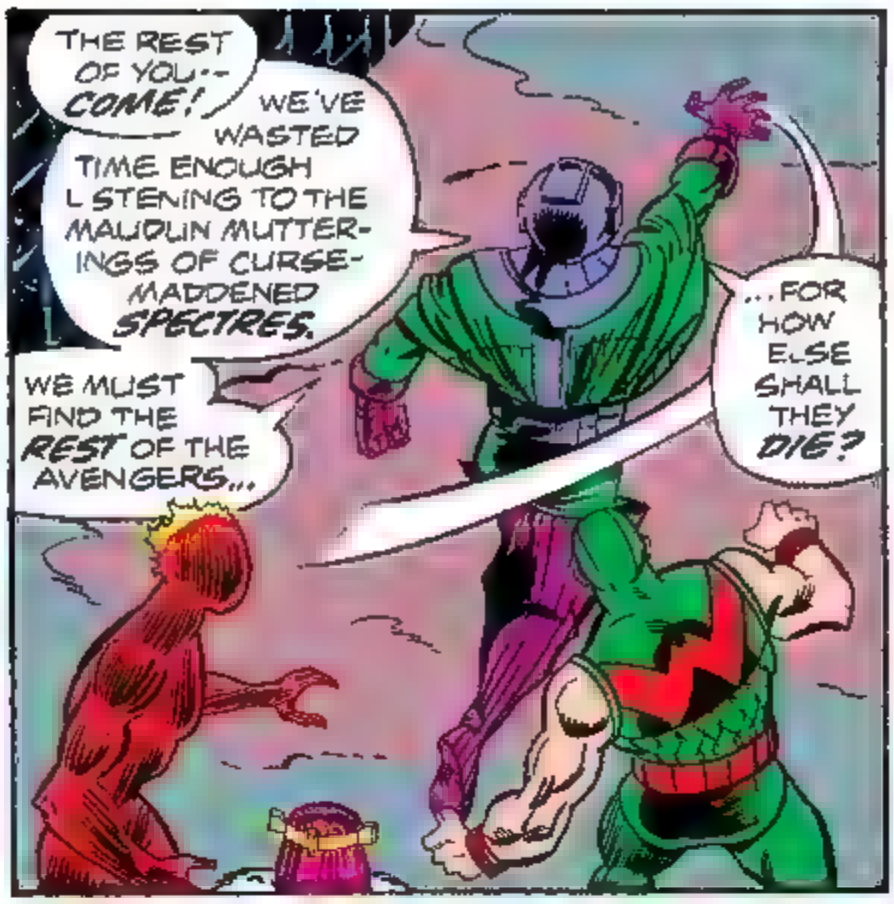

BETTER, THEN, TO DEPART--SO THAT I CAN CHOOSE THE TIME AND PLACE OF OUR NEXT MEETING...

...EVEN IN A LIMBO WHERE TIME AND SPACE DO NOT EXIST!
HE'S GETTING AWAY!


YOU BLUNDERING DOLTS! I SHOULD HAVE LEFT YOU ALL WHERE I FOUND YOU--
--SUFFERING FOREVER THE TORTURES OF THE DAMNED..
YOU? WHAT DO YOU KNOW, KANG, OF THE TOR-MENTS OF HELL?

TO YOU, TIME HAS EVER BEEN BUT A PLEASANT FOOTPATH, WHICH YOU MAY TREAD IN ANY DIRECTION YOU PLEASE.
BE FIRST A DOOMED HELMS-MAN FOR A CENTURY OR TWO --FATED FOREVER TO HAUNT THE SEVEN FATHOMLESS SEAS--
--THEN SPEAK TO ME OF THE "TORTURES OF THE DAMNED"!


AND NOW, THAT POINT MADE, I GO TO FIND THE VISION AND DEAL WITH HIM IN MY OWN WAY.
FOR, AFTER ALL, THOUGH I MAY RAGE AND RAIL, IT IS STILL KANG WHO IS THE MASTER HERE...
...WHILE I AM BUT... A GHOST!

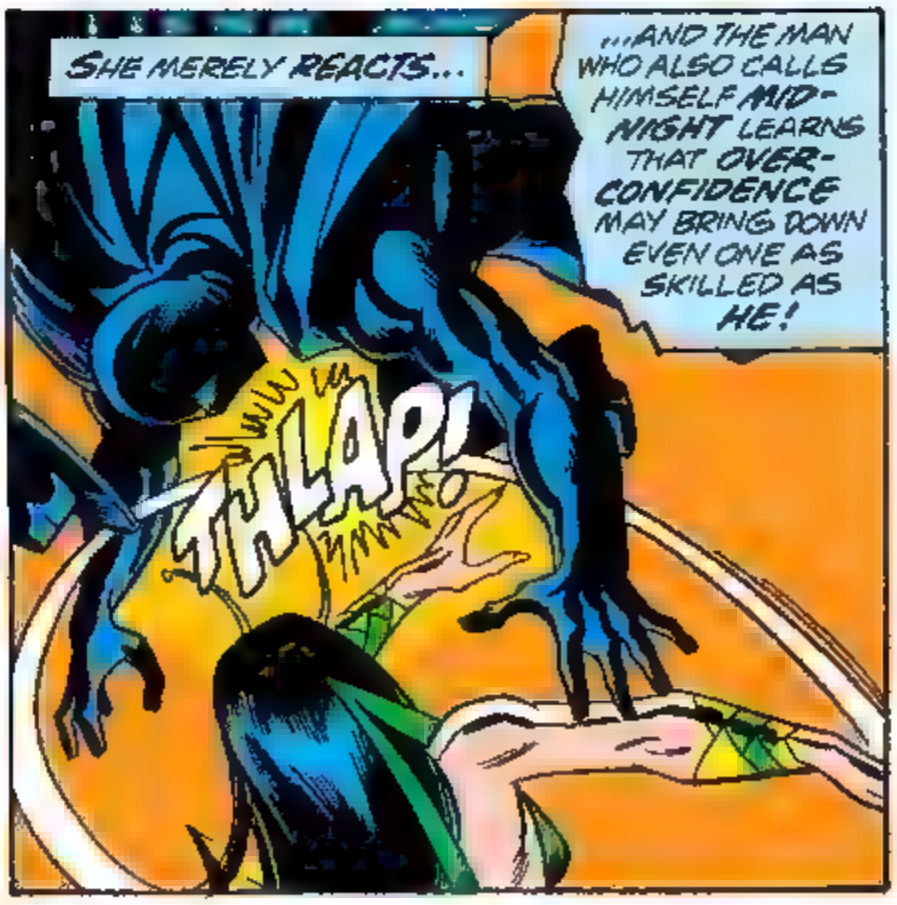

THE REST OF YOU-- COME!
WE'VE WASTED TIME ENOUGH LISTENING TO THE MALUDIN MUTTERINGS OF CURSE-MADDENED SPECTRES.
WE MUST FIND THE REST OF THE AVENGERS...
...FOR HOW ELSE SHALL THEY DIE?

MEANWHILE, WHAT OF THOSE OTHER AVENGERS?
THIS ONE CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT.
SHE FEELS NO EMPATHY... NO HUMAN FEELINGS EMANATING FROM ANYWHERE NEARBY.

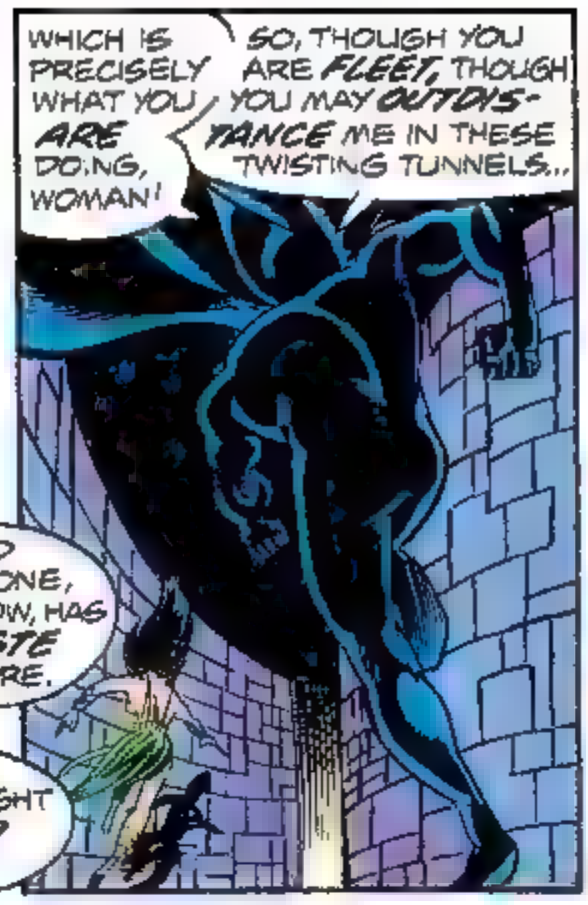
MY LABYRINTHINE PRISON MAY BE BENEATH THE HEART OF A THRONG-FILLED CITY... OR, AS KANG DECLARED, IN TIMELESS LIMBO.
IT MATTERS NOT.
THIS ONE IS STILL... ALONE.

ALONE NO LONGER, WOMAN...

...NOT WHILE M'NAI IS HERE!!
MANTIS DOES NOT KNOW, OR EVEN SUSPECT, HER SPRINGING FOE'S IDENTITY...
...LET ALONE THAT HE PERISHED, MONTHS AGO, IN MARTIAL-ARTS COMBAT WITH SHANG-CHI, HALF-BREED SON OF FU MANCHU.


SHE MERELY REACTS...
...AND THE MAN WHO ALSO CALLS HIMSELF MIDNIGHT LEARNS THAT OVERCONFIDENCE MAY BRING DOWN EVEN ONE AS SKILLED AS HE!
THLAP!

STILL, FOR ONCE, MANTIS' FIRST STRIKE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO BE HER LAST...
THOR HIMSELF WOULD HAVE BEEN FELLED BY THAT BLOW.
YET, THE DARK-CLAD ONE SWIFTLY RISES, EAGER TO CONTINUE OUR STRUGGLE.
AND THIS ONE, SOMEHOW, HAS NO TASTE FOR MORE.
IT IS AS IF SHE FOUGHT ... A DEAD MAN.

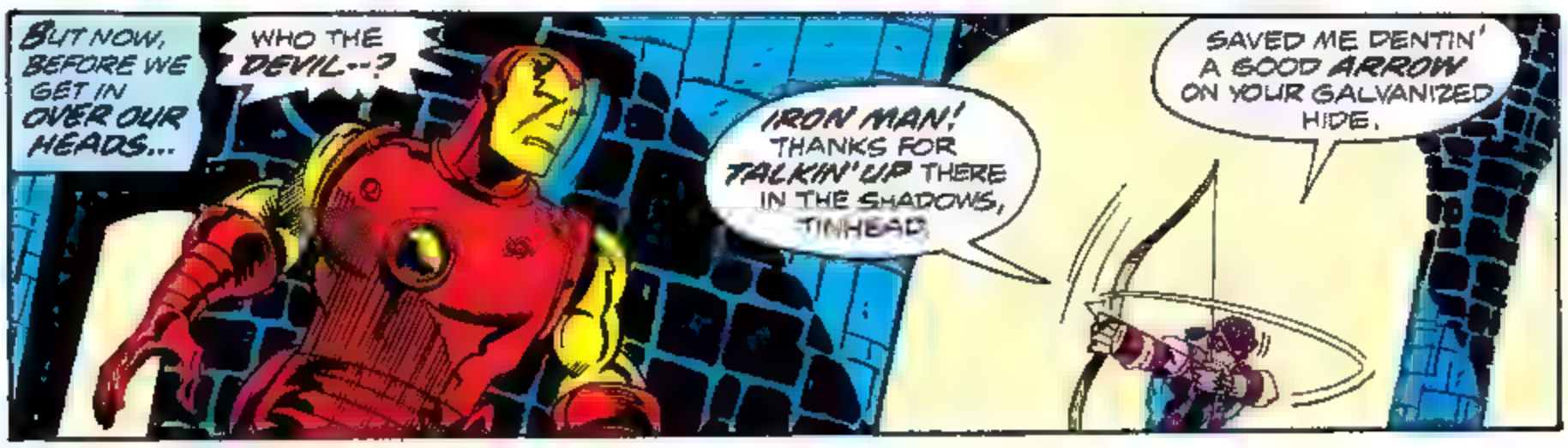

WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT YOU ARE DOING, WOMAN!
SO, THOUGH YOU ARE FLEET, THOUGH YOU MAY OUTDISTANCE ME IN THESE TWISTING TUNNELS...

STILL, NO ONE LIVING CAN ESCAPE FOREVER ONE WHO HAS COME BACK FROM THE NETHER SHORES OF DEATH...
...AND THUS CAN NEVER TIRE... NEVER FAIL... NEVER FAIL!

AS, ELSEWHERE IN LIMBO-LAND...
TRICKED! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AN ETERNITY OF STRIVING--I HAVE BEEN DUPED!
YOU DECEIVED YOURSELF, IMMORTUS.
KANG MERELY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THAT SALIENT FACT.

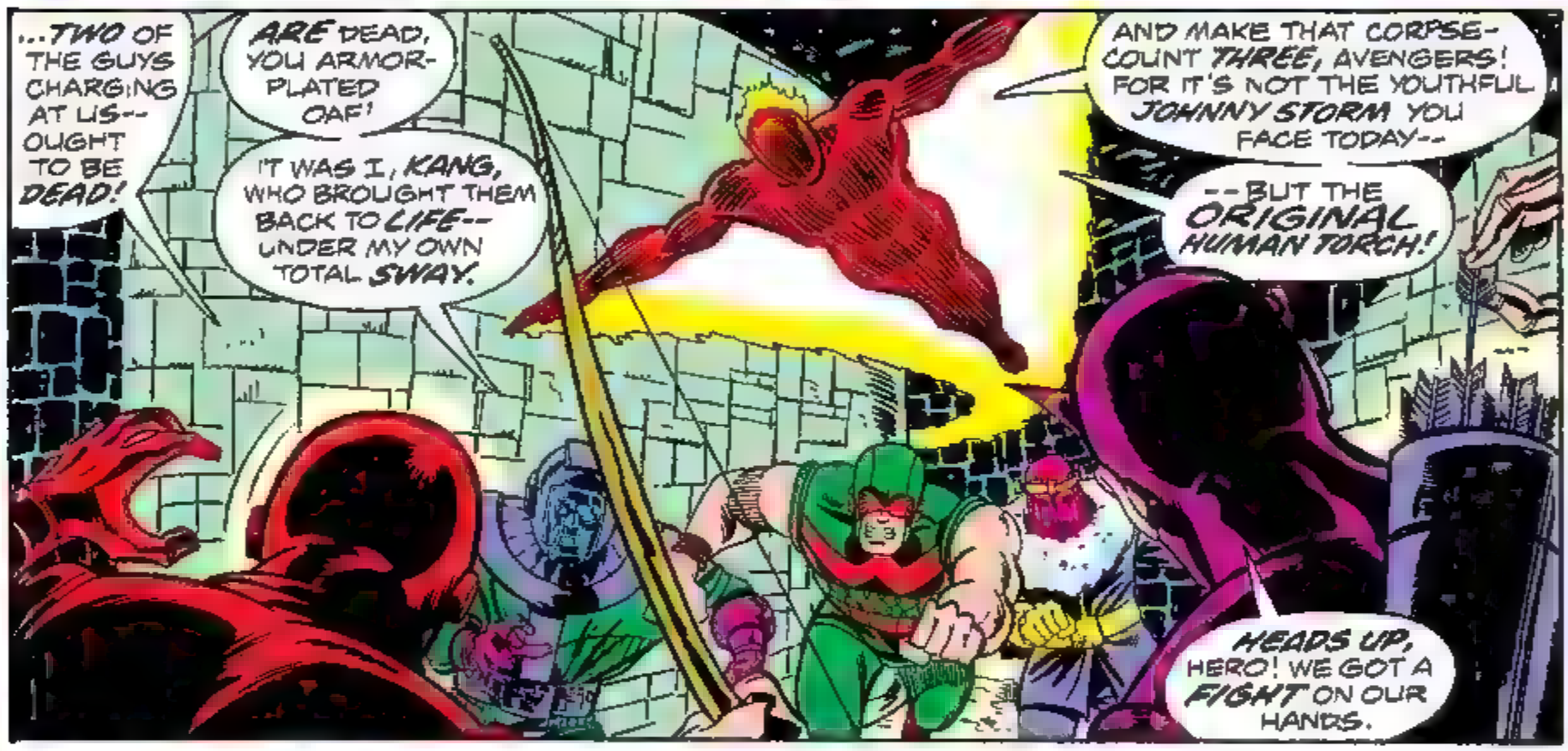
YOU! WHAT HELP WERE YOU, RAMA-TUT... SO-CALLED LAST OF THE PHARAOHS?
YOU CLAIM ACTUALLY TO BE KANG, IN A DIFFERENT INCARNATION... YET YOU DO NOTHING TO TRY TO THWART HIS INSANE LUST FOR TEMPORAL POWER.
ON THE CONTRARY...
I HAVE STRIVEN AGAINST HIM, IN MY WAY, FOR 5000 YEARS.

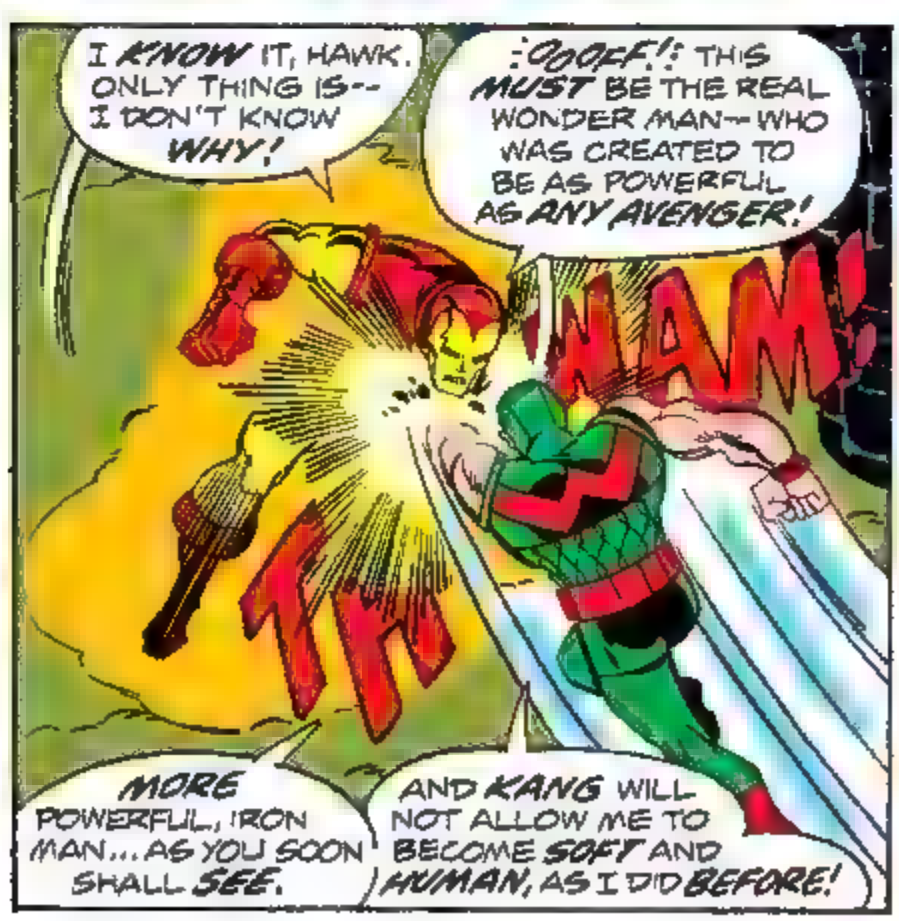
YET, I KNOW THAT WHICH YOU, FOR ALL YOUR IMMORTALITY, SEEM NOT TO:
THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN, IS WRITTEN... AND AN ETERNITY OF RAGING WILL NOT ALTER ONE INSTANT OF THAT WHICH WILL BE.
ONLY ONE MADDENING ENIGMA REMAINS!
WHO KNOWS THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN? WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL BE--IN THE END?


BUT NOW, BEFORE WE GET IN OVER OUR HEADS...
WHO THE DEVIL--?
IRON MAN! THANKS FOR TALKIN' UP THERE IN THE SHADOWS, TINHEAD.
SAVED ME DENTIN' A GOOD ARROW ON YOUR GALVANIZED HIDE.

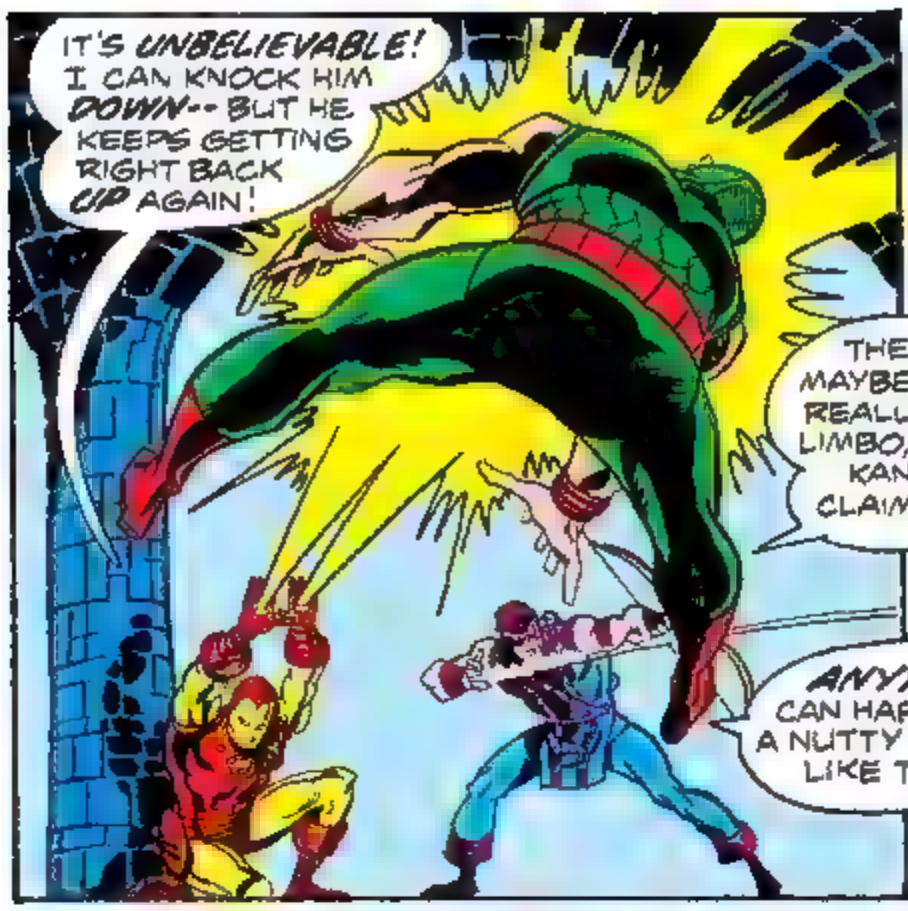
GLAD TO KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY AVENGER WHO WAS SNATCHED UP OUT OF NAM.
SEEN ANY OF THE OTHER THREE AROUND, HAWKEYE?
NOPE BEEN WANDERIN' FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE HOURS... AND NUTHIN'!
I'M STARTIN' TO THINK THIS PLACE GOES ON FOREVER, JUST LIKE--

THERE ARE YOUR COSTUMED PREY! ATTACK, MY UNLIVING LEGIONS!
HUH? WHOEVER JUST SHOUTED THAT-- HE SURE AIN'T ONE FOR BEATIN' AROUND THE BUSH!
THAT'S NOT THE UNCANNY PART OF IT, OLD BUDDY...

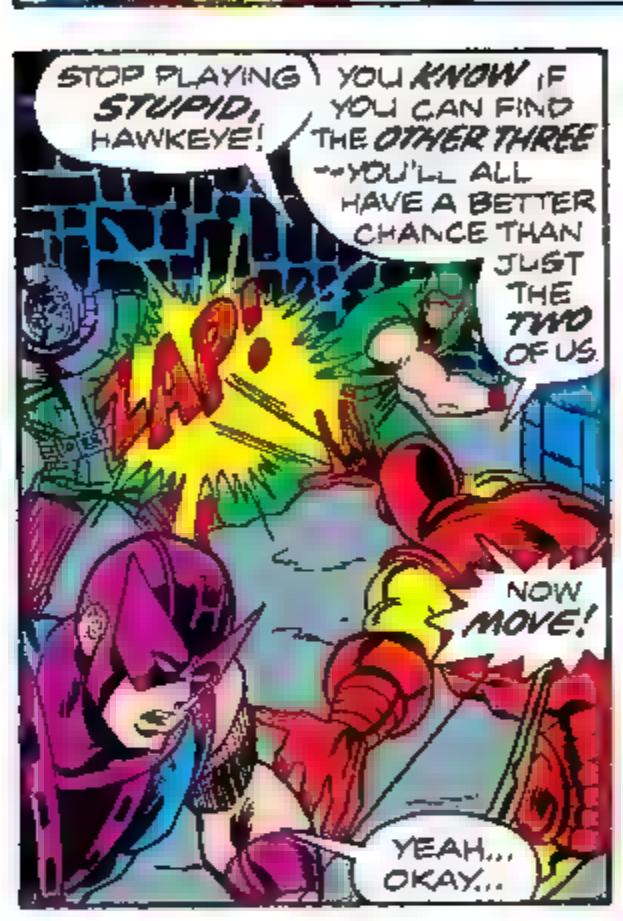

...TWO OF THE GUYS CHARGING AT US-- OUGHT TO BE DEAD!
ARE DEAD, YOU ARMOR-PLATED OAF!
IT WAS I, KANG, WHO BROUGHT THEM BACK TO LIFE-- UNDER MY OWN TOTAL SWAY.
AND MAKE THAT CORPSE-COUNT THREE, AVENGERS! FOR IT'S NOT THE YOUTHFUL JOHNNY STORM YOU FACE TODAY--
--BUT THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH!
HEADS UP, HERO! WE GOT A FIGHT ON OUR HANDS.


I KNOW IT, HAWK. ONLY THING IS-- I DON'T KNOW WHY!
:OOOFF!: THIS MUST BE THE REAL WONDER MAN-- WHO WAS CREATED TO BE AS POWERFUL AS ANY AVENGER!
WAM
MORE POWERFUL, IRON MAN... AS YOU SOON SHALL SEE.
AND KANG WILL NOT ALLOW ME TO BECOME SOFT AND HUMAN, AS I DID BEFORE!

IT'S REALLY CAPTAIN AMERICA WHO OUGHTTA BE ZAPPIN' YOUR LITTLE PASTIE-GUN, ZEMO BABY...
STILL, I HOPE YOU WON'T MIND A DESIGNATED PINCH-HITTER.
THEN MY OLDEST, MOST HATED FOE IS NOT AMONG KANG'S CAPTIVES?
NO MATTER! I SHALL WREAK MY REVENGE INSTEAD-- UPON HIS FRIENDS!
FROOM!


IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! I CAN KNOCK HIM DOWN-- BUT HE KEEPS GETTING RIGHT BACK UP AGAIN!
THEN-- MAYBE THIS REALLY IS LIMBO, LIKE KANG CLAIMED.
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN A NUTTY PLACE LIKE THIS!

WHICH MEANS-- THERE'S ONLY ONE COURSE OPEN.
MAKE A BREAK FOR IT, BOW-SLINGER! SEE IF YOU CAN FIND THE OTHERS, AND GAIN TIME TO MAKE A LAST STAND AGAINST THESE UNDEAD DEVILS!
ME-- PULL A WOMEN-KIDS-AND ARCHERS-FIRST ROUTINE? NOT ON YOUR LIFE, KIDDO!
I'M WITH YOU ALL THE WAY!


STOP PLAYING STUPID, HAWKEYE!
YOU KNOW IF YOU CAN FIND THE OTHER THREE --YOU'LL ALL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE THAN JUST THE TWO OF US.
ZAP!
NOW MOVE!
YEAH... OKAY...

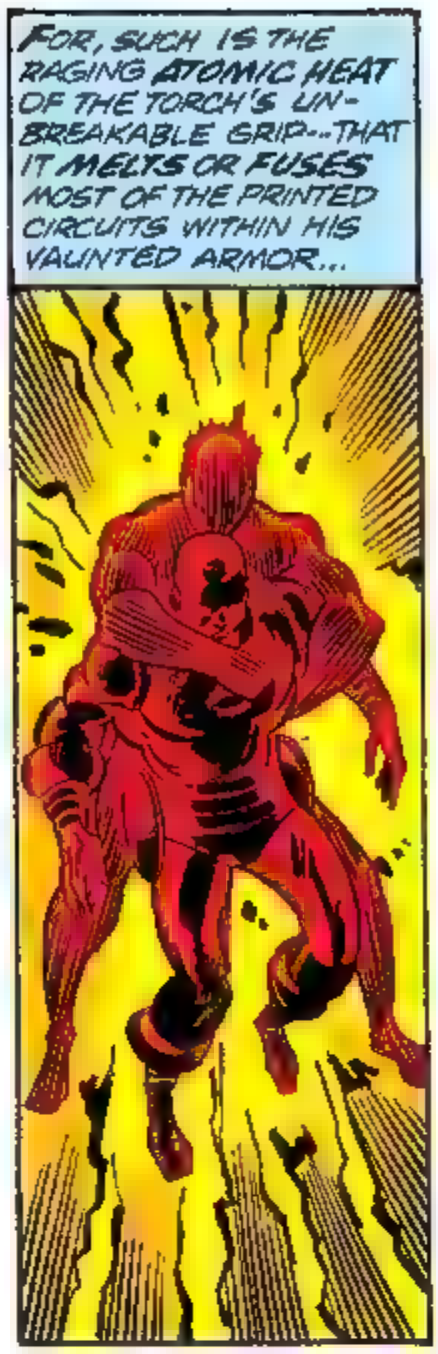
BUT I GET THE FEELING I'M BEING TREATED LIKE A JUNIOR WOOD-CHUCK AGAIN...
AND I SURE AS BLAZES DON'T LIKE IT!

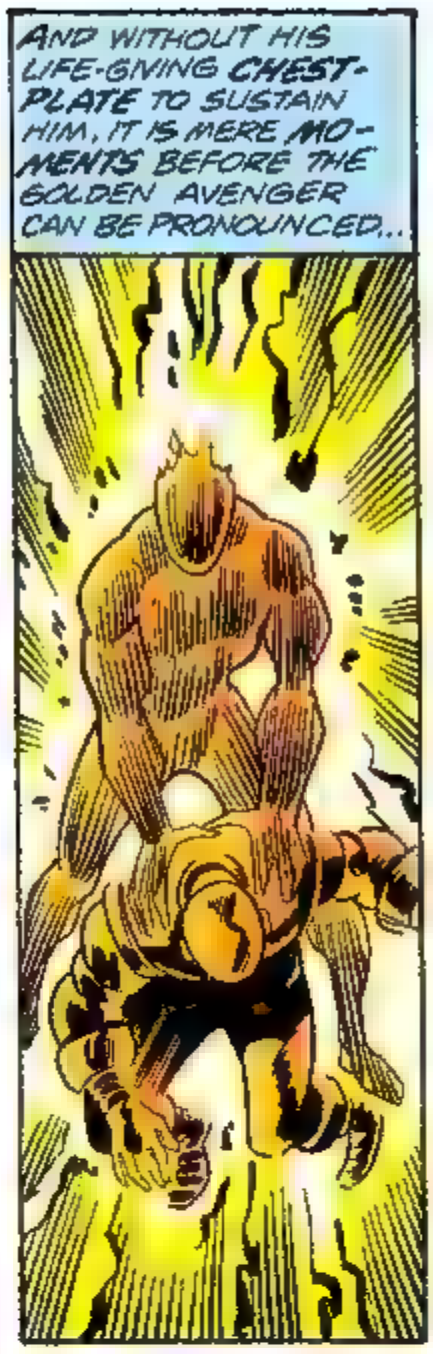
NOT THAT THAT IS THE UPPER-MOST THING ON IRON MAN'S MIND JUST NOW...!
TORCH! I'VE STUNNED HIM.
GNNN!

NOW, STRIKE-- JUST AS I HAVE TOLD YOU!

STRIKE--AND DON'T LET GO!!
AARRR

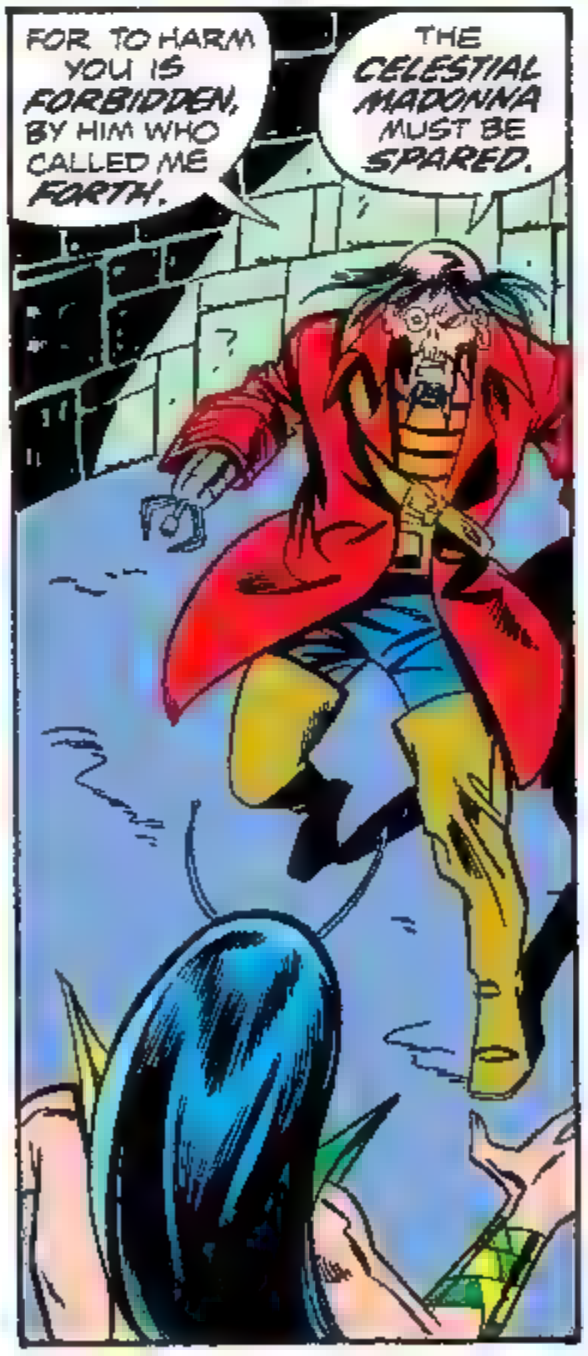
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW, PERHAPS, THE FEELINGS WHICH RACE THRU THE MIND OF THE FIRST HUMAN TORCH-- HE WHO WAS A BLAZING SUPERHERO, THREE DECADES AGO, AND NOW IS REDUCED TO A MAD-MAN'S UNLIVING PAWN.
YET, IRON MAN'S THOUGHTS AND FEARS LEAVE LESS ROOM FOR THE IMAGINATION.


FOR, SUCH IS THE RAGING ATOMIC HEAT OF THE TORCH'S UN-BREAKABLE GRIP--THAT IT MELTS OR FUSES MOST OF THE PRINTED CIRCUITS WITHIN HIS VAUNTED ARMOR...


AND WITHOUT HIS LIFE-GIVING CHEST-PLATE TO SUSTAIN HIM, IT IS MERE MO-MENTS BEFORE THE GOLDEN AVENGER CAN BE PRONOUNCED...

DEAD!
NO PULSE... NO HEART-BEAT. HE IS DONE!
YOU HAVE DONE YOUR WORK WELL, ANDROID!

YET, WE DARE NOT DWELL UPON ONE TRAGEDY, WHILE OTHERS TREAD HARD ON ITS HEELS...
SO! THIS ONE IS CONFRONTED WITH WOULD-BE ASSASSINS ON ALL SIDES.
COME THEN! YOUR VISAGE IS AWESOME ENOUGH.
LET US SEE IF YOUR FIGHT-ING PROWESS MATCHES IT.
NO...

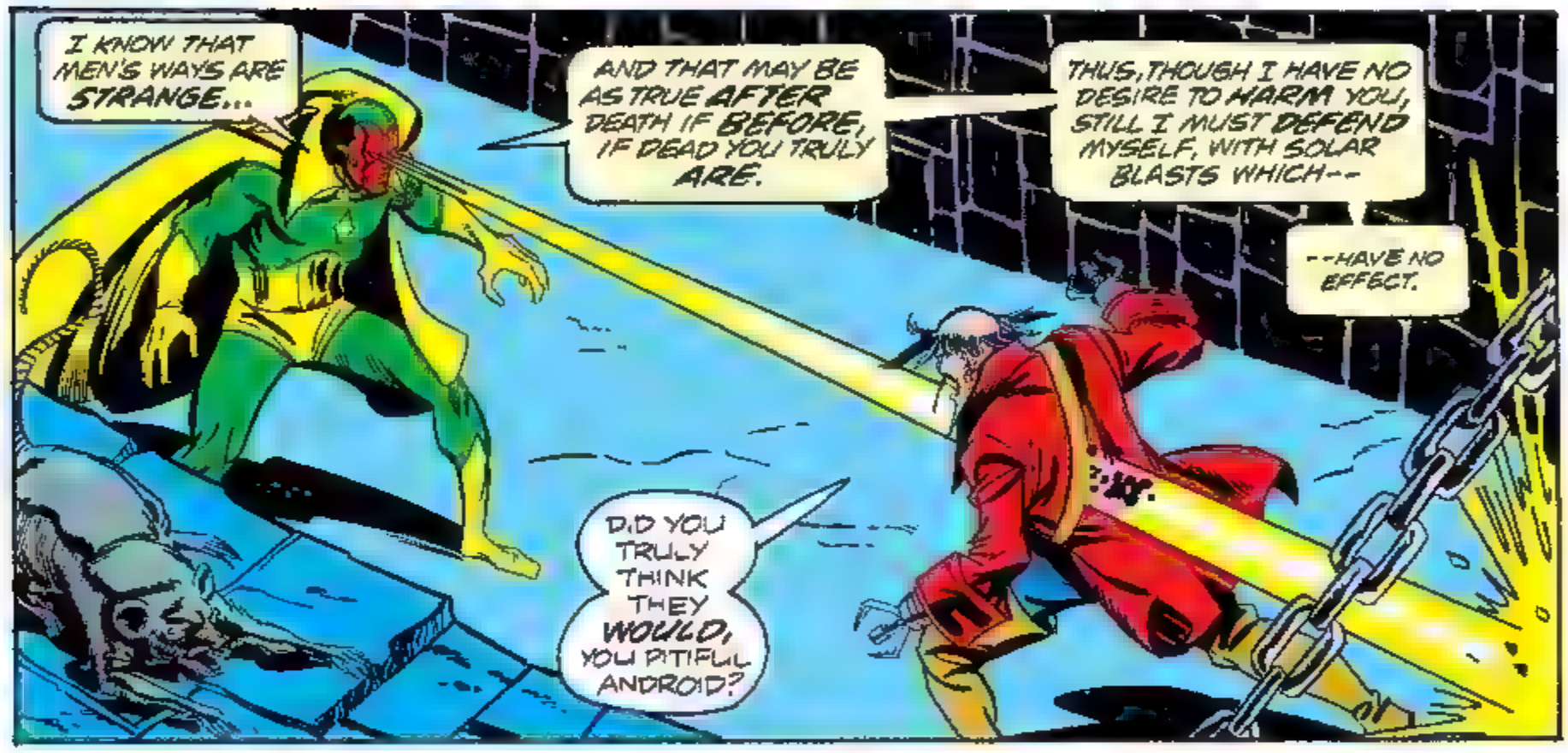

FOR TO HARM YOU IS FORBIDDEN, BY HIM WHO CALLED ME FORTH.
THE CELESTIAL MADONNA MUST BE SPARED.

IT IS THE VISION WHOM I SEEK.
THE VISION!
AGAIN THIS TALK OF ME AS THE CELESTIAL MADONNA... A PHRASE I CAN SCARCELY COMPRE-HEND.
WHAT CAN IT ALL MEAN?

WHILE, NOT FAR AND YET A WORLD AWAY...
I SENCE A NEARNESS... AN EERIE PRESENCE...

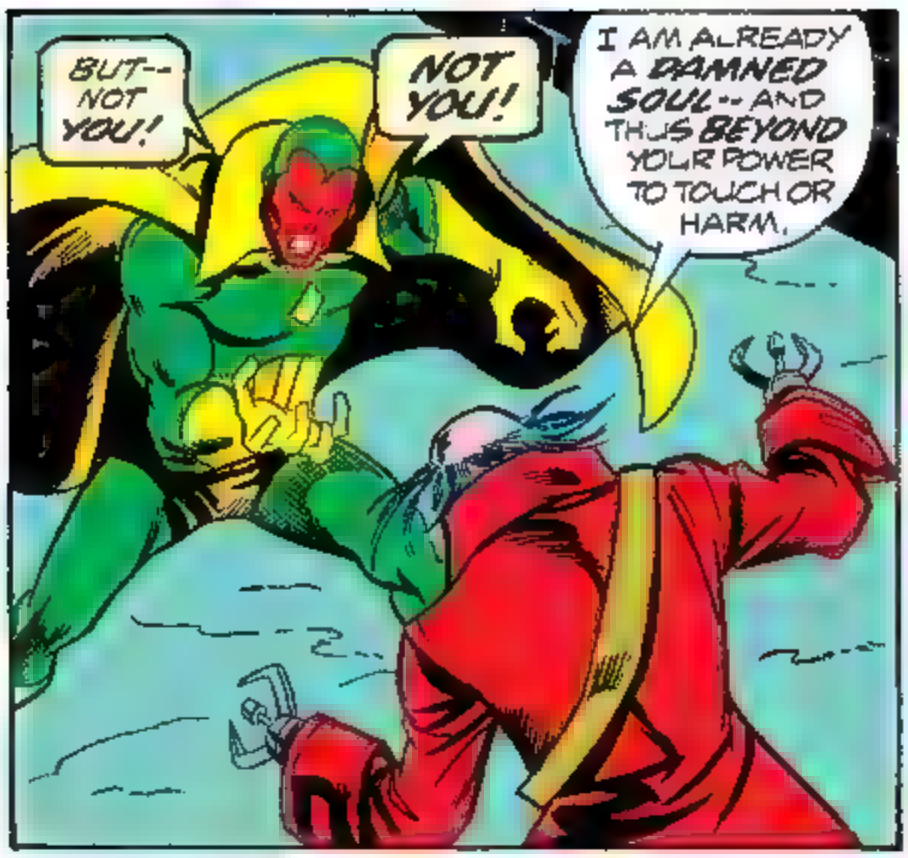
MINE, VISION! I HAVE COME TO REQUEST THAT YOU JOIN ME... IN DEATH.
IT IS AN INVITATION I SHALL NOT ALLOW YOU TO REFUSE.
--BUT--WHY? I DO NOT KNOW YOU..

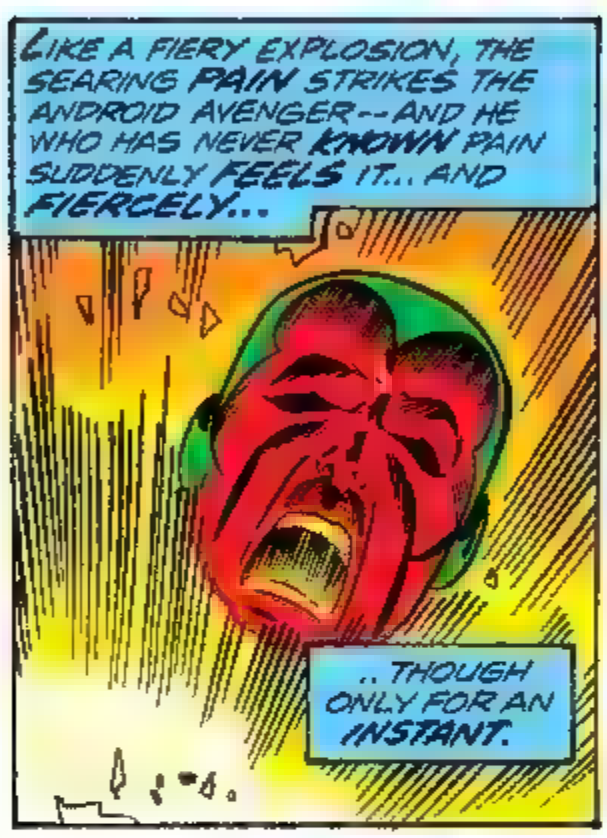
YOU KNOW NOTHING-- NOT LIFE, NOT DEATH-- FOR, YOUR VERY EXISTENCE IS AN ARTIFICIAL MOCKERY OF BOTH!
THAT IS WHY I HATE YOU--AND WHY I MUST KILL YOU!
ENOUGH, THEN...

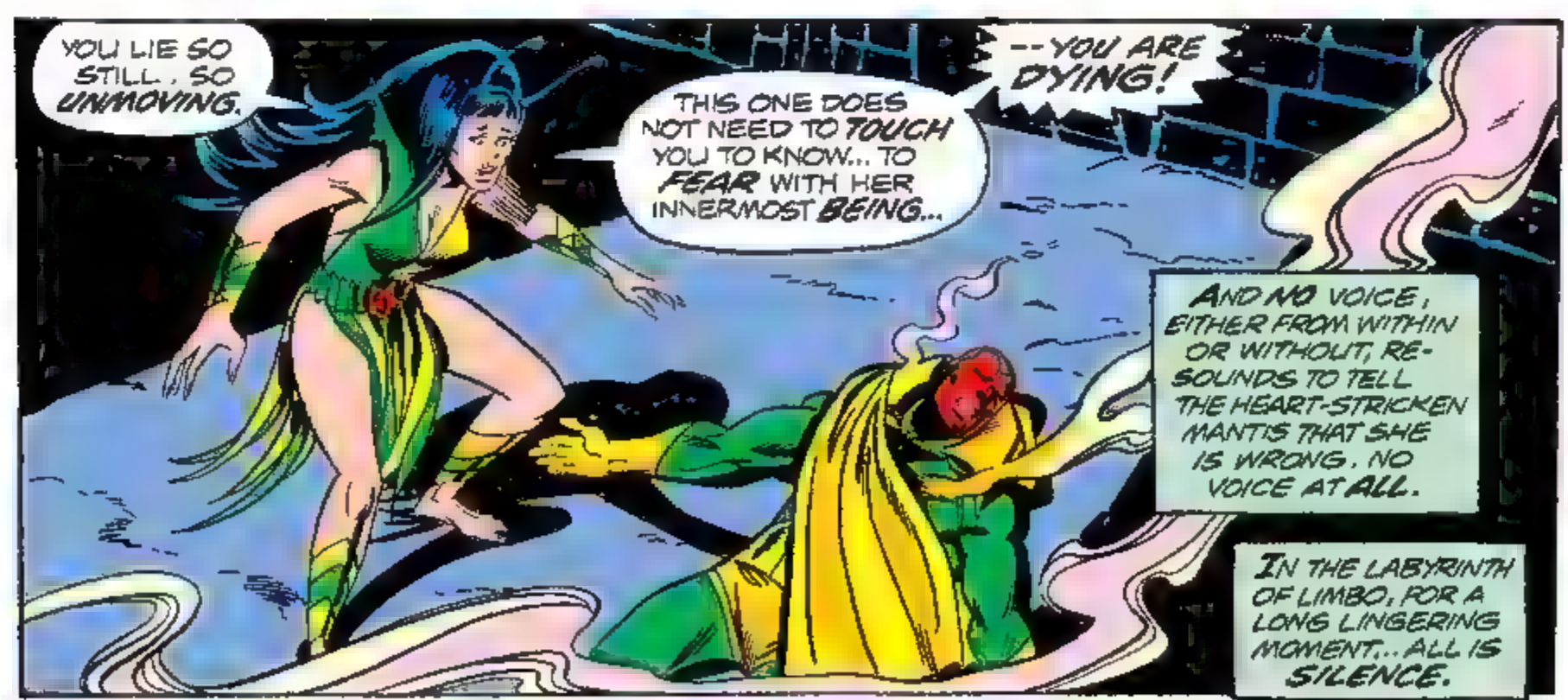

I KNOW THAT MEN'S WAYS ARE STRANGE...
AND THAT MAY BE AS TRUE AFTER DEATH IF BEFORE, IF DEAD YOU TRULY ARE.
THUS, THOUGH I HAVE NO DESIRE TO HARM YOU, STILL I MUST DEFEND MYSELF, WITH SOLAR BLASTS WHICH--
--HAVE NO EFFECT.
DID YOU TRULY THINK THEY WOULD, YOU PITIFUL ANDROID?

I AM JOOST VAN STRAATEN... HE WHO WAS DAMNED TO SAIL THE SEA-PATHS TILL THE END OF TIME.
DID YOU TRULY THINK ANYTHING COULD STOP ONE WHO HAS COME TWICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE?!
FOR WHAT YOU ARE... FOR WHAT I AM NOT...
...YOU MUST DIE!!

PERHAPS NOT--IF THIS MORE AGGRESSIVE STANCE WILL--
IMPRESSIVE, I MUST ADM.T. YOU BECOME UNSOLID...
...THEN SOLIDIFY WITHIN A MAN...CAUSE HIM PAIN AND HARM...!







TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE FORTHCOMING GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #3, IN THE TALE WE CALL--

"WHAT TIME HATH PUT ASUNDER!"

GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS
3
FEB
02922
50¢
68 BIG PAGES
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS™
NEW! The TITANS OUT of TIME!
THOR! IRON MAN! IT IS FATED THAT IN THIS NAMELESS PLACE, ONE OF US THREE SHALL DIE!
AYE! BUT-- WHO SHALL IT BE? WHO?

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

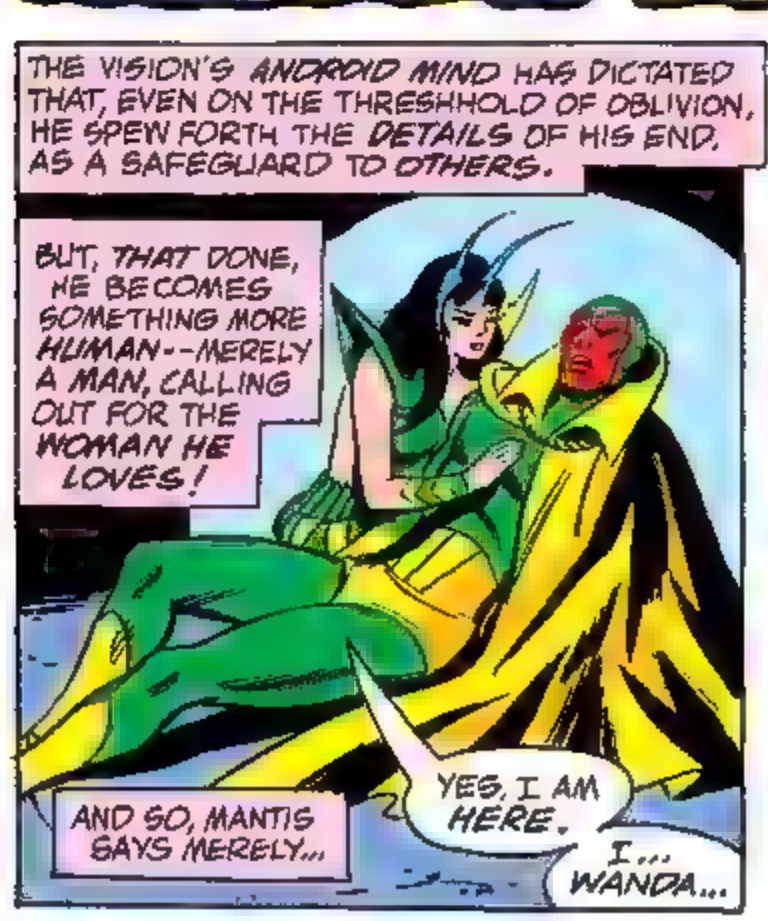
STEVE ENGLEHART PLOT & TITLE / ROY THOMAS SCRIPT & EDITING / DAVE COCKRUM JOE GIELLA • ILLUSTRATION / L.G. PETER • LETTERING PETRA G. • COLORIST

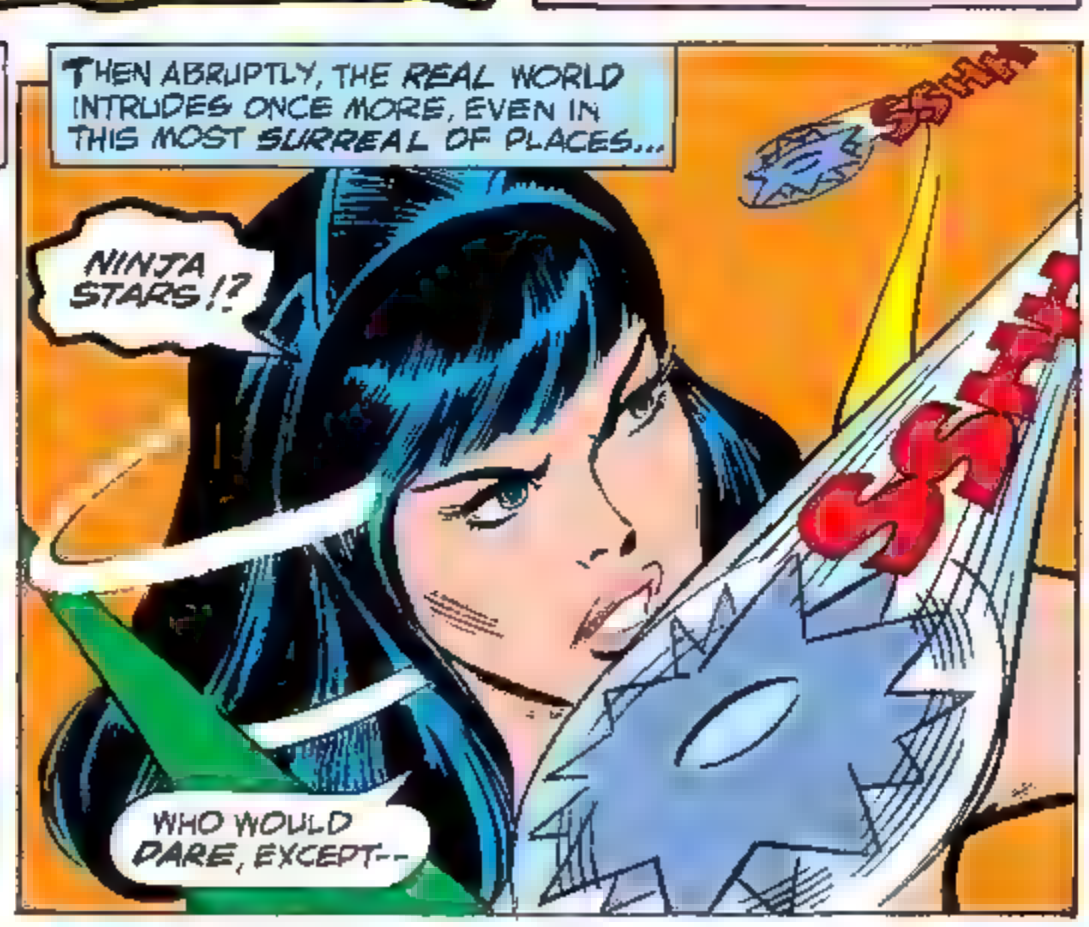
KANG WAR II : CONCLUSION

...What TIME hath put asunder!

SPECIAL NOTE: REMEMBER, READ THIS MONTH'S 25¢ ISSUE FIRST. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

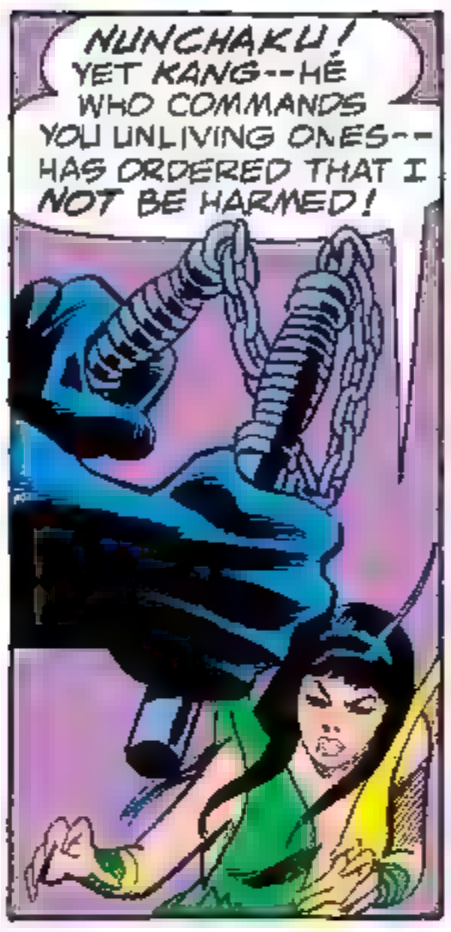
WHO DID THIS, AVENGER?
WHO??
ONE WHO-- CALLED HIMSELF-- THE GHOST--!
I HAD--NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE*--YET HE RUSHED AT ME--WITH MURDER IN HIS SHADOWED GLARE--
--PLUNGED HIS ARM INTO ME-- AS I HAVE OFTEN DONE WITH OTHERS!
*BUT THE SILVER SURFER DID, IN ISSUE #8-9 OF HIS OWN LATE, LAMENTED MAGAZINE. --ROY.



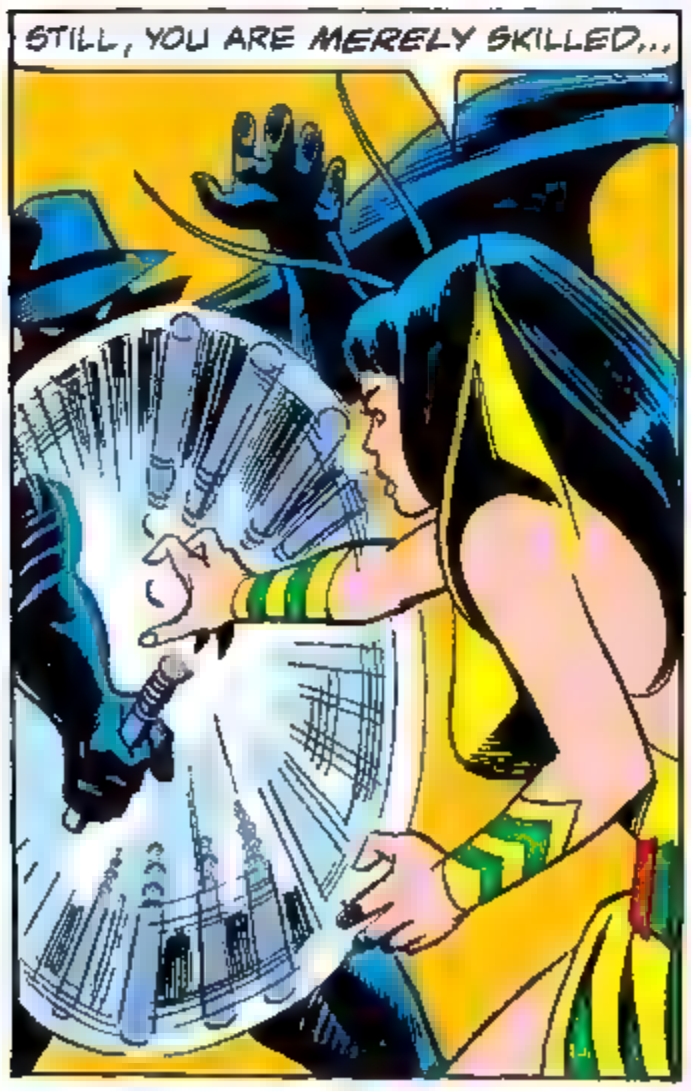


ONCE MORE-- YOU!!
THE ONE WHO CALLS HIMSELF-- MIDNIGHT!
OUR FIRST BATTLE WAS INCONCLUSIVE, WOMAN--AND THUS UNSATISFYING TO ME!
I HAVE RETURNED, BECAUSE I MUST PROVE MYSELF, EVEN IN THESE UNEARTHLY SURROUNDINGS.
FOR, AM I NOT THE GREATEST MARTIAL-ARTS MASTER OF ALL!

YOU SAY NOTHING... BECAUSE YOU DO NOT KNOW.
WELL, YOU SHALL LEARN.
YOU SHALL LEARN NOW!

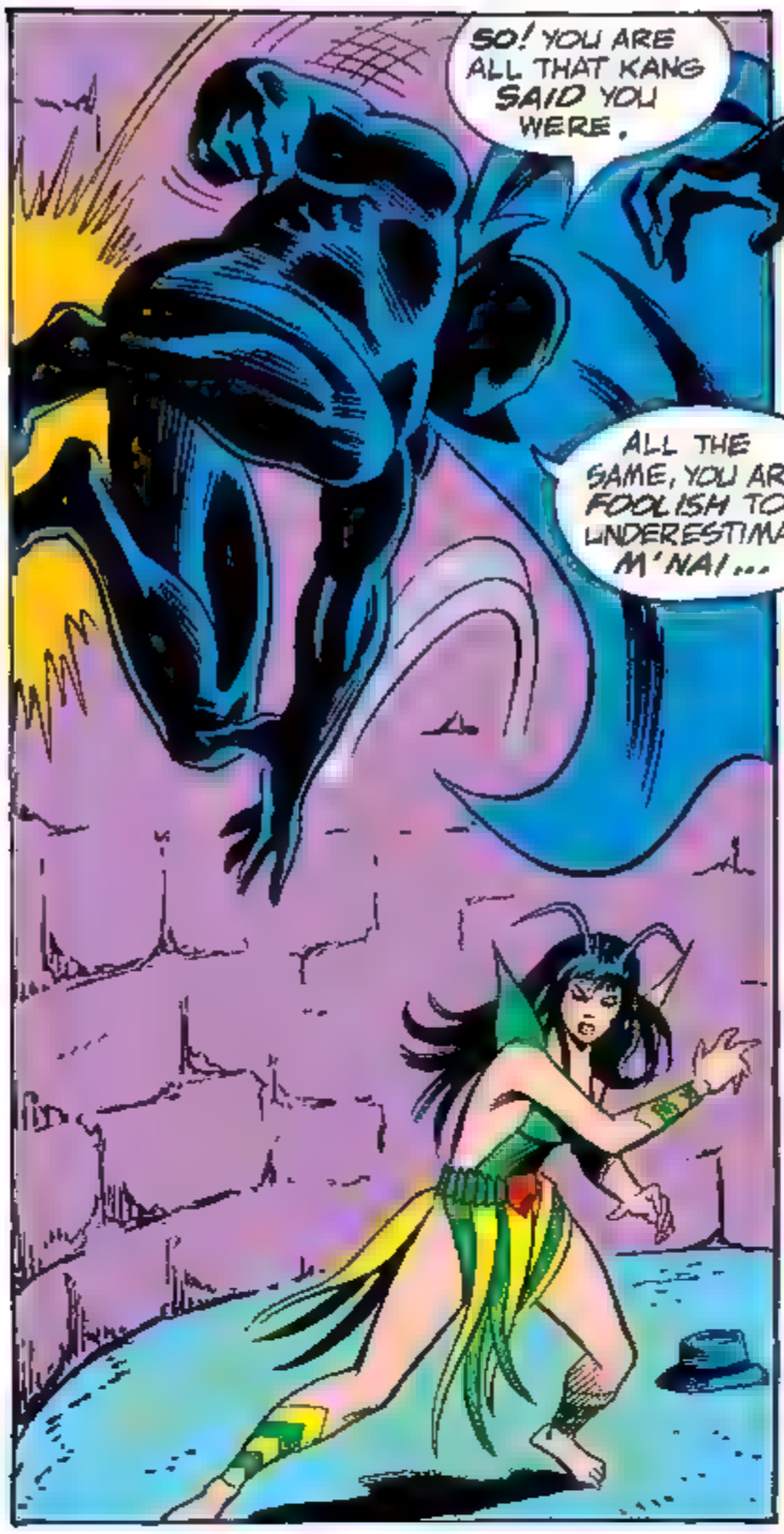

NUNCHAKU! YET KANG--HE WHO COMMANDS YOU UNLIVING ONES-- HAS ORDERED THAT I NOT BE HARMED!

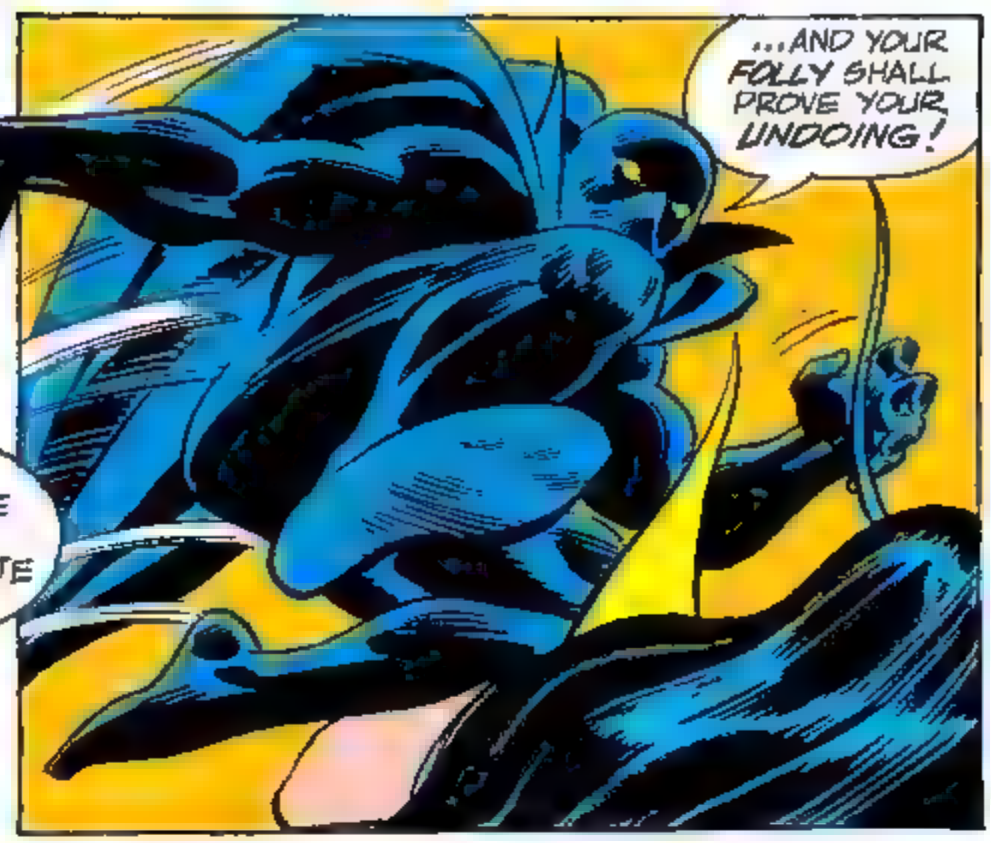
SO HE ORDERED. BUT, EACH MOMENT FURTHER FROM THE GRAVE WHICH CLAIMED ME, THE LESS AM I UNDER HIS SPELL.
ON YOUR GUARD, FEMALE!
YOU ARE SKILLED WITH THAT WEAPON, MIDNIGHT...

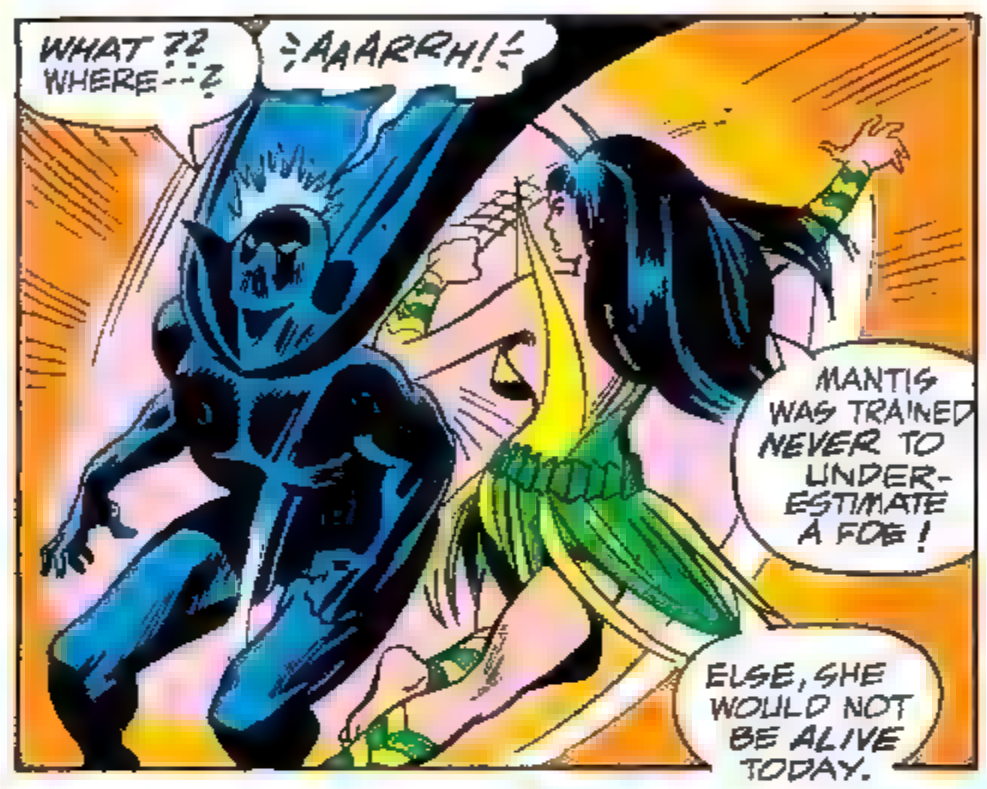

STILL, YOU ARE MERELY SKILLED...

...WHILE THIS ONE...

...IS WITHOUT PEER!

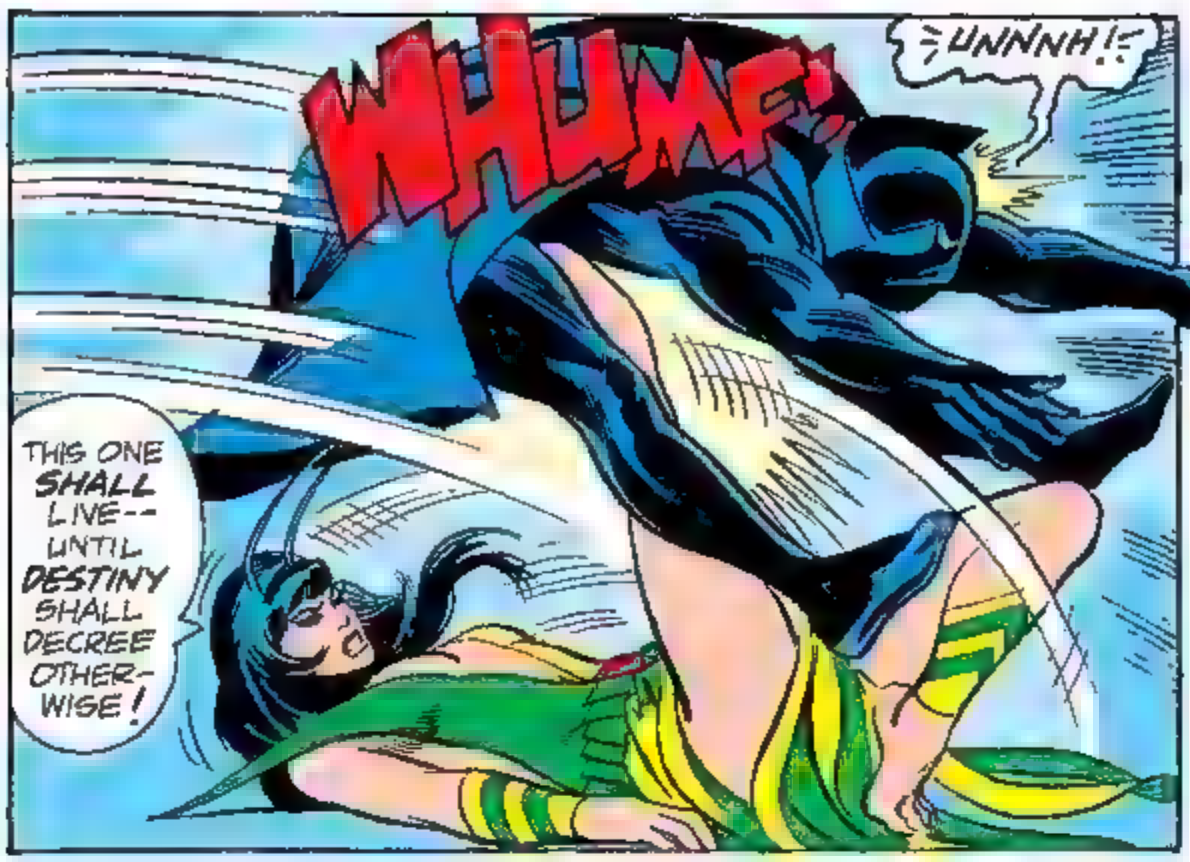

SO! YOU ARE ALL THAT KANG SAID YOU WERE.
ALL THE SAME, YOU ARE FOOLISH TO UNDERESTIMATE M'NA!...

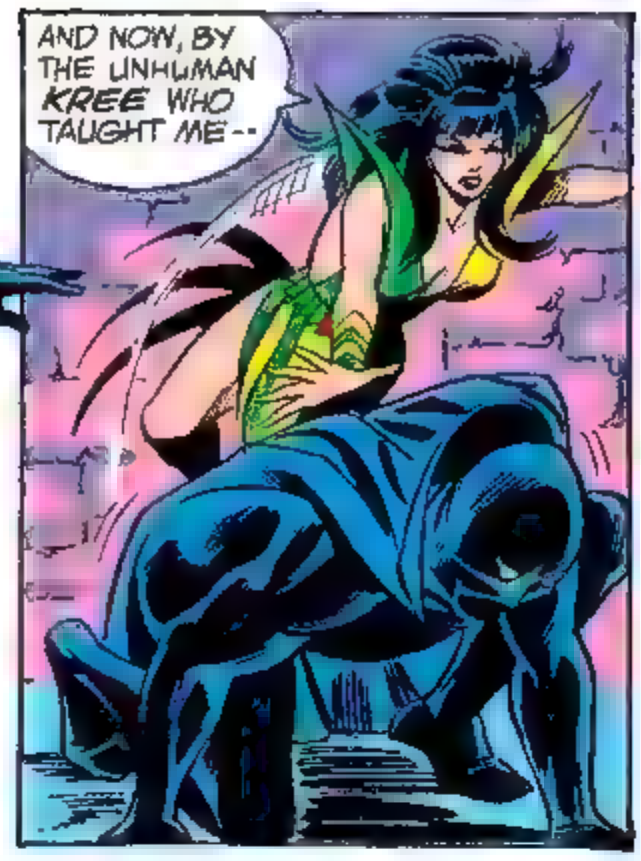

...AND YOUR FOLLY SHALL PROVE YOUR UNDOING!


WHAT ?? WHERE--?
AAARRH!
MANTIS WAS TRAINED NEVER TO UNDER-ESTIMATE A FOE!
ELSE, SHE WOULD NOT BE ALIVE TODAY.

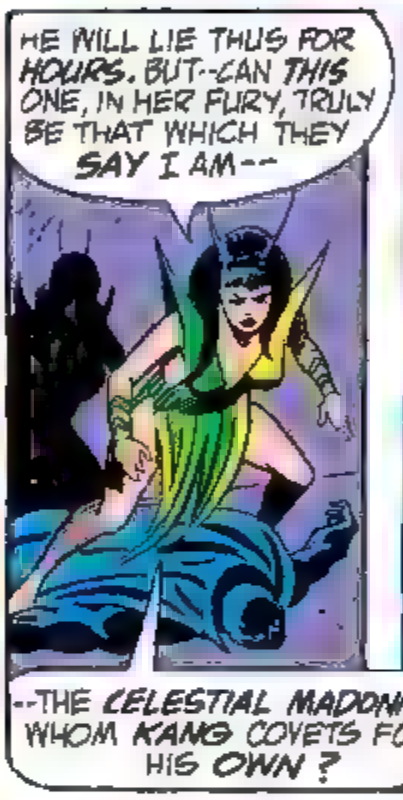
ALIVE!? ALIVE!?
DO NOT SEEK, LIKE KANG, TO LORD IT OVER ME SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU ARE ALIVE--
FTAP!
--WHILE I AM ONE OF THE LEGION OF THE UNLIVING!!

NOW, BY MY ANCESTORS-- AND AGAINST THE WILL OF THE USURPER KANG--
--YOU SHALL LIVE NO LONGER!


WHUMF!
UNNNH!
THIS ONE SHALL LIVE-- UNTIL DESTINY SHALL DECREE OTHER-WISE!


AND NOW, BY THE UNHUMAN KREE WHO TAUGHT ME--

--THERE SHALL COME AN ENDING!
GNNG


HE WILL LIE THUS FOR HOURS. BUT--CAN THIS ONE, IN HER FURY, TRULY BE THAT WHICH THEY SAY I AM--
--THE CELESTIAL MADONNA, WHOM KANG COVETS FOR HIS OWN?

STILL, THAT CAN BE SETTLED LATER. NOW--
BY THE GREAT PAMA!

THE VISION!
HE IS-- GONE!!
FOR THE FIRST TIME, THERE IS FEAR IN MANTIS' VOICE...

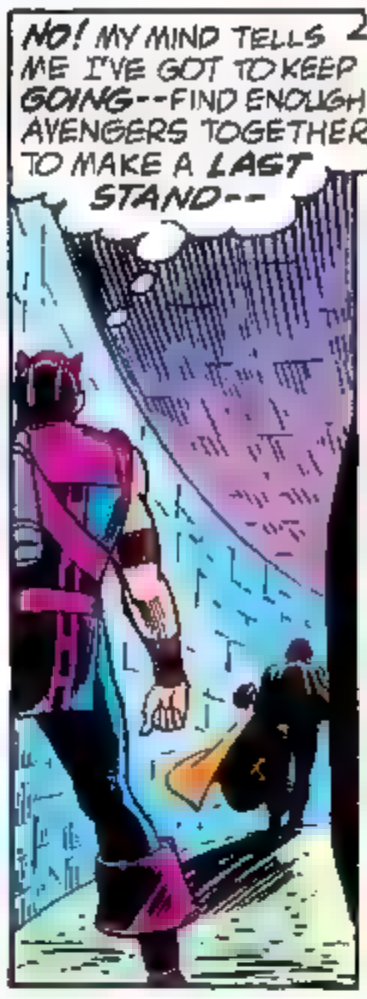
NOR WOULD SHE REST AT EASE IF SHE COULD BEHOLD HER FELLOW AVENGER, ALREADY SOME DISTANCE AWAY...IN THE ARMS OF THE UNLIVING, UNDYING FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER!
IT IS AS IF THE FIEND HAS SENSED, SOME-HOW, IN HIS WORD-LESS WAY...
...THAT THIS FRAIL RED FORM IS NOT TOTALLY UNLIKE HIMSELF!

IT IS AN ANDROID... A SPECIMEN OF ARTIFICIAL LIFE...
AND HE? IS HE ANY MORE THAN THAT?

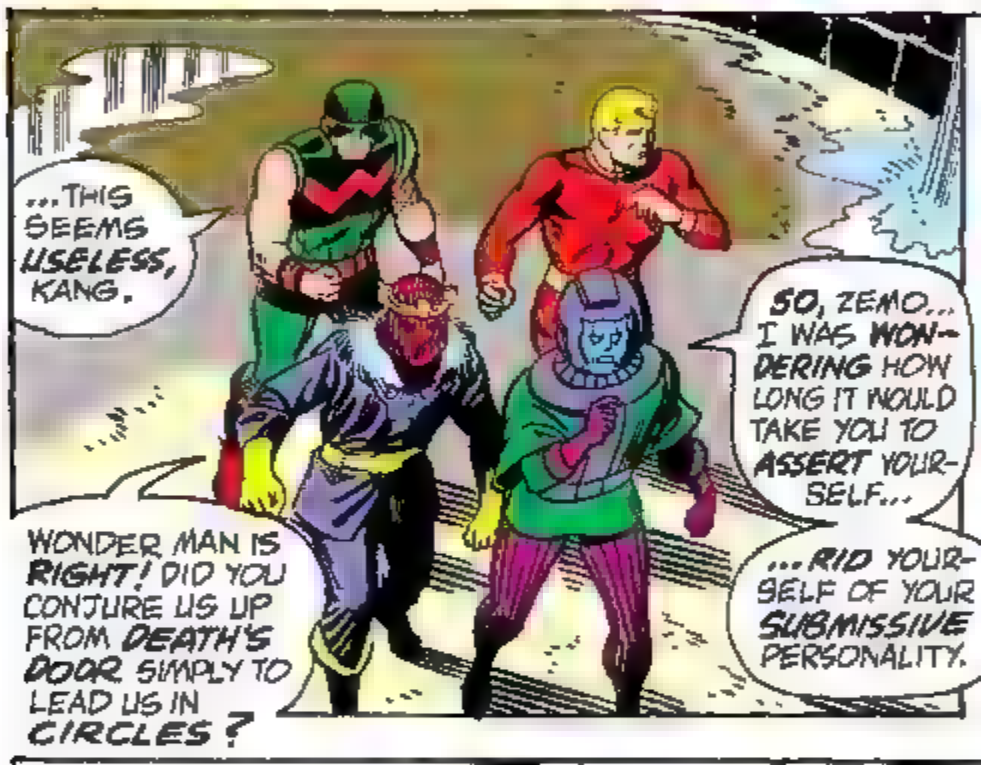
HIS THOUGHTS ARE STILL CONFUSED, HOWEVER, SO HE SHAMBLES ON...

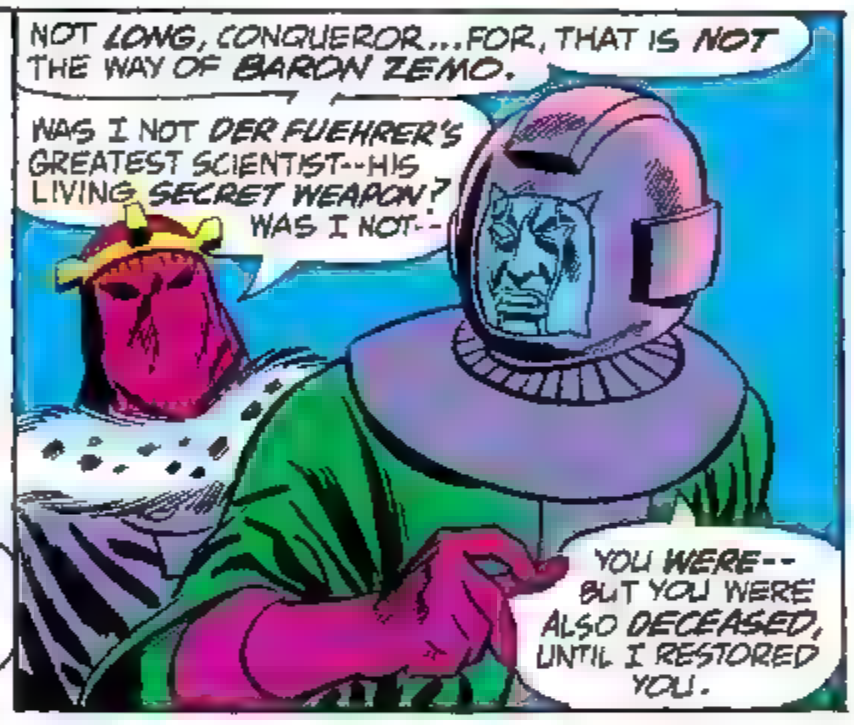
...LEAVING BEHIND A SILENT, UNSEEN MOURNER.
OH NO--NOT ANOTHER AVENGER DEAD!
FIRST IRON MAN*--NOW THE VISION!
WE'RE DROPPING LIKE FLIES!
*AT THE HUMAN TORCH'S HAND, IN AVENGERS #132.--ROY.

I COULD TACKLE THAT BIG PALOOKA, WHOEVER OR WHATEVER HE IS--
BUT EVEN IF I WON--IT WOULDN'T BRING VIZH BACK.


NO! MY MIND TELLS ME I'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING--FIND ENOUGH AVENGERS TOGETHER TO MAKE A LAST STAND--

--NO MATTER WHAT THE REST OF ME SAYS!


...THIS SEEMS USELESS, KANG.
SO, ZEMO... I WAS WONDERING HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE YOU TO ASSERT YOURSELF...
...RID YOURSELF OF YOUR SUBMISSIVE PERSONALITY.
WONDER MAN IS RIGHT! DID YOU CONJURE US UP FROM DEATH'S DOOR SIMPLY TO LEAD US IN CIRCLES?


NOT LONG, CONQUEROR...FOR, THAT IS NOT THE WAY OF BARON ZEMO.
WAS I NOT DER FUEHRER'S GREATEST SCIENTIST--HIS LIVING SECRET WEAPON? WAS I NOT--
YOU WERE--BUT YOU WERE ALSO DECEASED, UNTIL I RESTORED YOU.

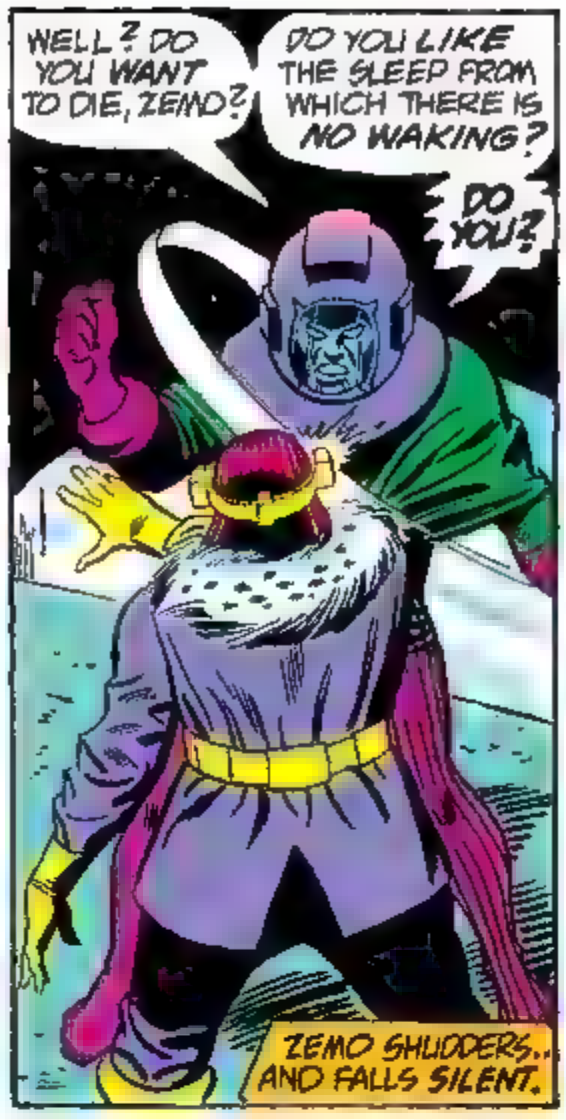
AND TO DEATH SHALL YOU RETURN, AS YOU WELL KNOW--IF YOU DO NOT DO MY FULL BIDDING.
TORCH! WONDER MAN! SEARCH FOR THE ANDROID CALLED THE VISION!
DO NOT RETURN WITHOUT HIM!

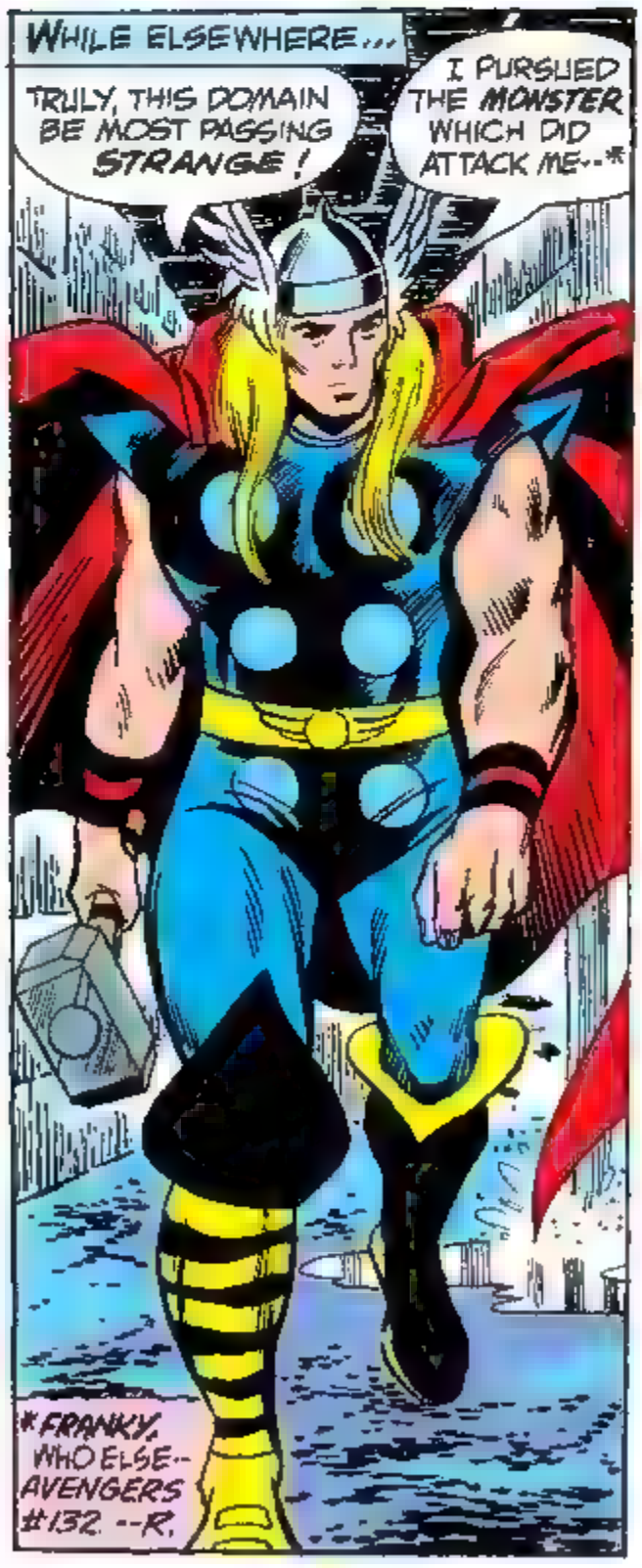
WHY US, TORCH? WHAT MAKES HIM THINK WE'LL RUN INTO THAT AVENGER, RATHER THAN HIMSELF?
THIS IS--HIS WORLD, FRIEND!
OH, IF ONLY MY OWN WILL POWER WOULD COME BACK TO ME!

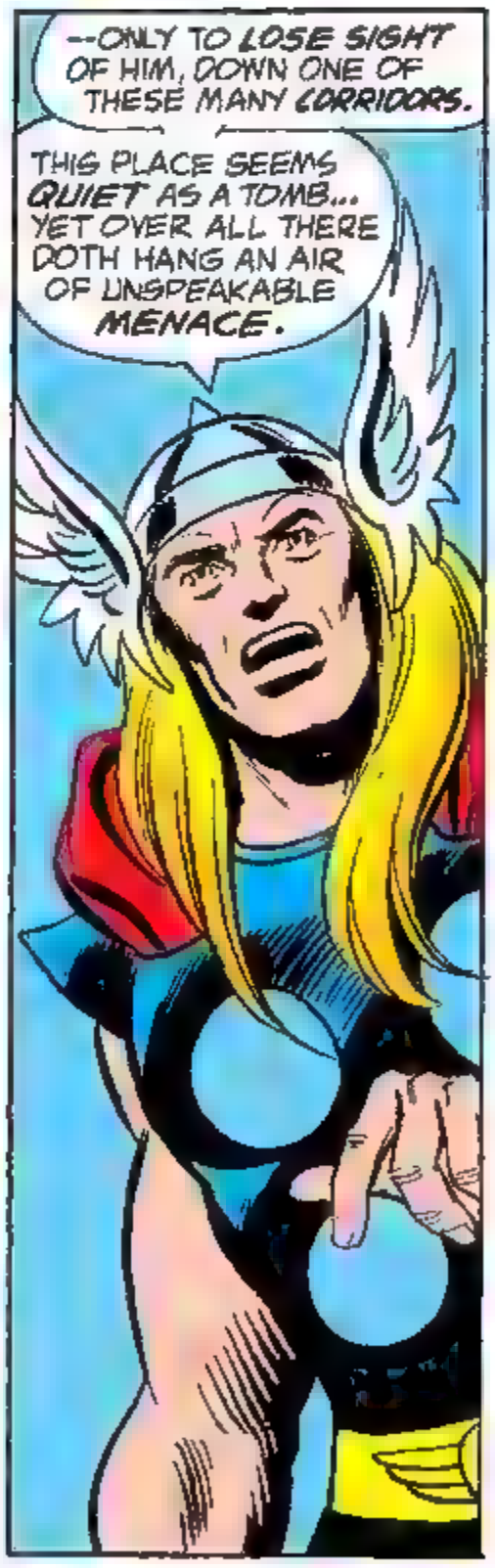
NOW, KANG--I HAVE A PROPOSITION TO OFFER YOU. TOGETHER, WE CAN--
AND I HAVE ONE FOR YOU:
OBEY ME--OR DIE ANEW!

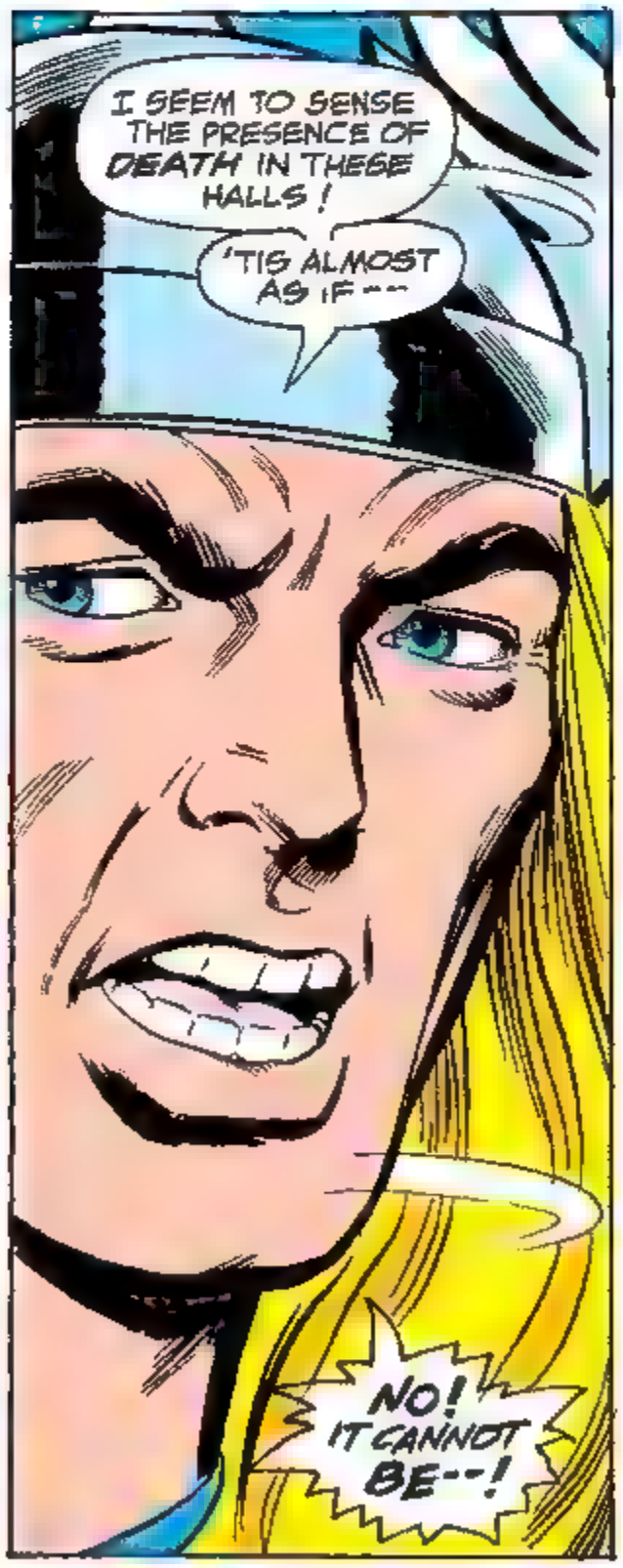
WHAT? HOW DARE YOU SPEAK THUS TO ONE OF THE MASTER RACE-- A HARBINGER OF THE THIRD REICH--!
I'LL SPEAK TO YOU ANY WAY I WISH, SLAVE!
SLAVE!?

AYE--SLAVE YOU ARE, AND I THE MASTER! FOR, IT WAS I WHO DECEIVED THE TIME-MONITORING IMMORTUS--
--USED HIS APPARATUS TO RESTORE YOU SIX TO LIFE, THEN OVER-POWERED HIM!
AND ONLY I CAN KEEP YOU LIVING AND SENTIENT!

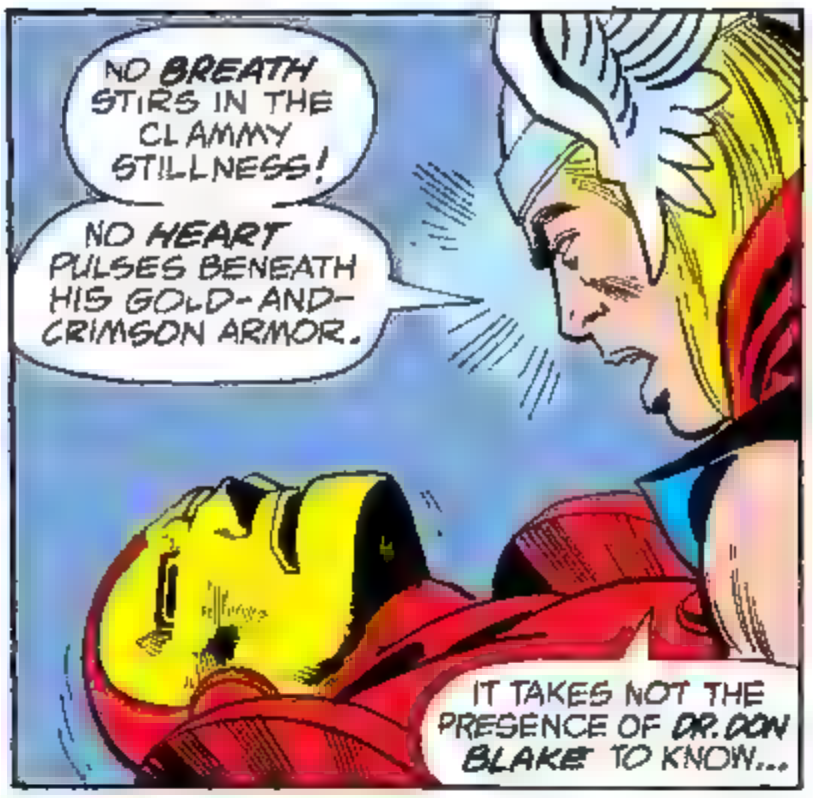

WELL? DO YOU WANT TO DIE, ZEMO?
DO YOU LIKE THE SLEEP FROM WHICH THERE IS NO WAKING?
DO YOU?
ZEMO SHUDDERS.. AND FALLS SILENT.

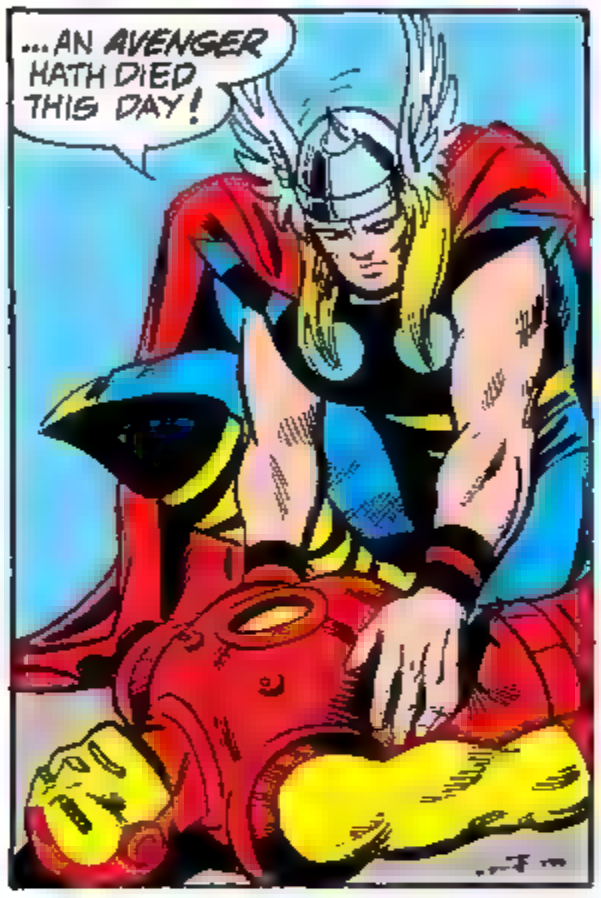

WHILE ELSEWHERE...
TRULY, THIS DOMAIN BE MOST PASSING STRANGE!
I PURSUED THE MONSTER WHICH DID ATTACK ME--*
*FRANKY, WHO ELSE-- AVENGERS #132. --R.


--ONLY TO LOSE SIGHT OF HIM, DOWN ONE OF THESE MANY CORRIDORS.
THIS PLACE SEEMS QUIET AS A TOMB... YET OVER ALL THERE DOTH HANG AN AIR OF UNSPEAKABLE MENACE.


I SEEM TO SENSE THE PRESENCE OF DEATH IN THESE HALLS!
'TIS ALMOST AS IF---
NO! IT CANNOT BE--!

IRON MAN!!

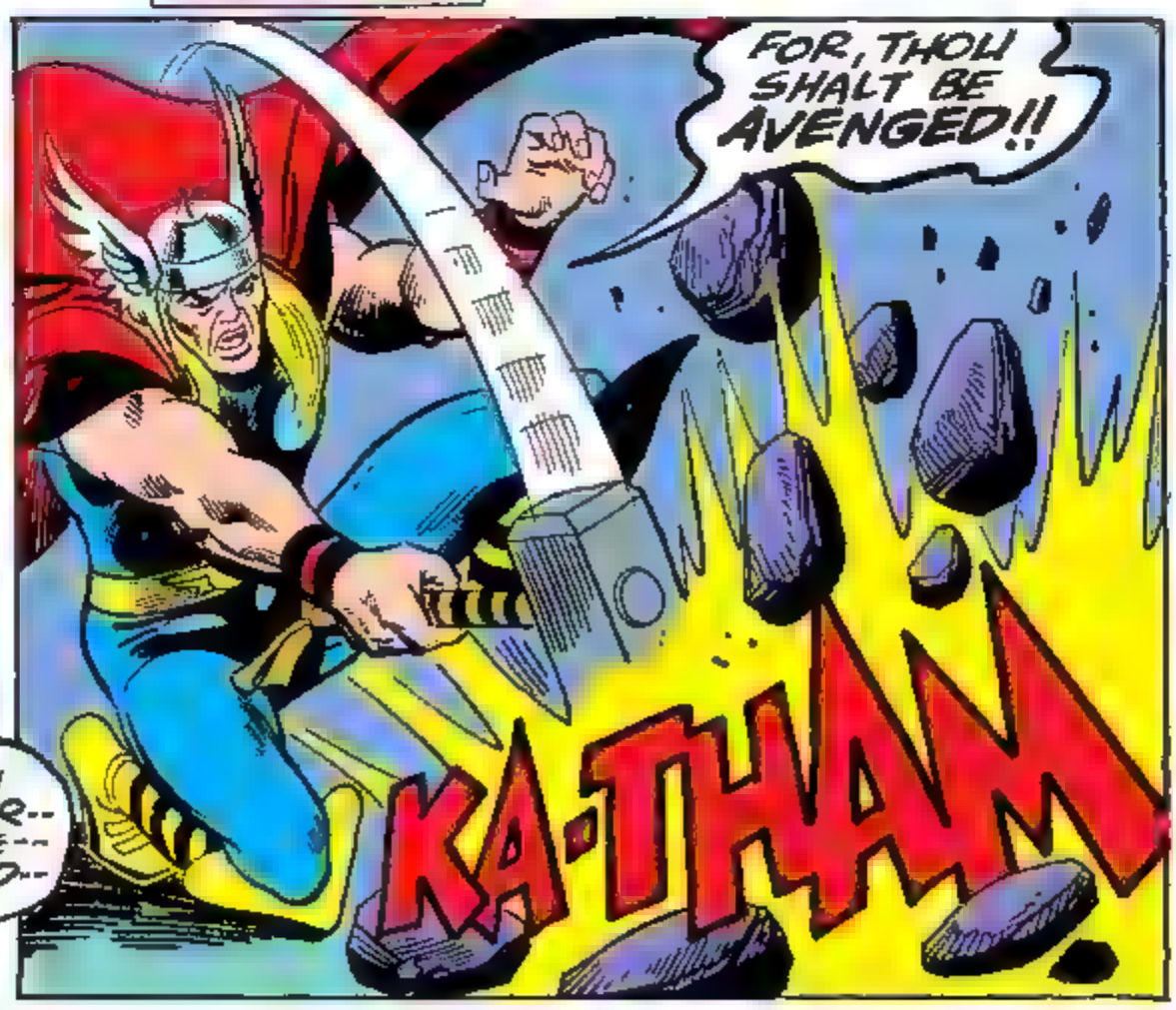

NO BREATH STIRS IN THE CLAMMY STILLNESS!
NO HEART PULSES BENEATH HIS GOLD-AND-CRIMSON ARMOR.
IT TAKES NOT THE PRESENCE OF DR. DON BLAKE TO KNOW...


...AN AVENGER HATH DIED THIS DAY!

AND THERE, IN THE SILENCE, PERHAPS THOR KNOWS A MOMENT OF WHAT SHALL BEFALL...
...WHEN THE DAY OF RAGNAROK HAS COME TO THE FABLED ASGARD.

BUT THEN, A SAVAGE SNARL CURLS HIS LIPS--SO THAT HIS FELLOW GODS WOULD SCARCELY KNOW HIM--
'TWAS KANG WHO DID THIS--
--KANG, AND THOSE WHO SERVE HIM IN THIS HELLISH LIMBO!

REST THEE WELL, IRON MAN--
--FELLOW AVENGER-- COMRADE-- FRIEND--


FOR, THOU SHALT BE AVENGED!!
KA-THAM!

MEANWHILE, JUST TO PROVE TO YOU THAT THE SO-CALLED REAL WORLD STILL EXISTS...

...LET'S RETURN FOR A MOMENT TO NEW YORK CITY, WHERE A GLEAMING MINI-STAR SHINES BRIGHTLY OVER AVENGERS MANSION...

...A STAR WHICH MAY JUST HERALD THE COMING OF THE CELESTIAL MADONNA.

BUT, FOR NOW, FEW KNOW THIS.. AND FEWER STILL WOULD COMPREHEND...

OKAY, OKAY-- BREAK IT UP!

SO THE AVENGERS PLUGGED IN THEIR CHRISTMAS TREE EARLY THIS YEAR. SO WHAT?

YES, OFFICERS? I AM JARVIS, THE AVENGERS' PERSONAL BUTLER.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE A BURGLAR, ANSWERIN' THE DOOR LIKE THAT!

YES, SIR.

UH--ARE THE AVENGERS HERE? I'VE GOT TO--

SORRY, SIR, BUT THE AVENGERS ARE...AWAY!

ALL OF 'EM? IT ALWAYS SEEMED TO ME LIKE THERE WAS A HUNDRED OR SO--!

WELL, ACTUALLY, MISS WANDA IS HERE...

...BUT SHE'S INCOMMUNICADO!

LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT RELIGION SHE IS. THE COMMISSIONER WANTS TO TALK TO SOMEBODY, AND--

HERE! MAYBE YOU'LL DO...!

ANYTHING I CAN DO TO BE OF SERVICE, SIR...

CAPTAIN AMERICA? IRON MAN? WHO THE DEVIL'S THERE?

ONLY JARVIS, SIR... THE AVENGERS' PERSONAL--

STARK ELECTRONICS

WELL, TELL YOUR BOSSES TO GET ON A STICK--

--'CAUSE I'VE GOT BAD NEWS FOR THEM!

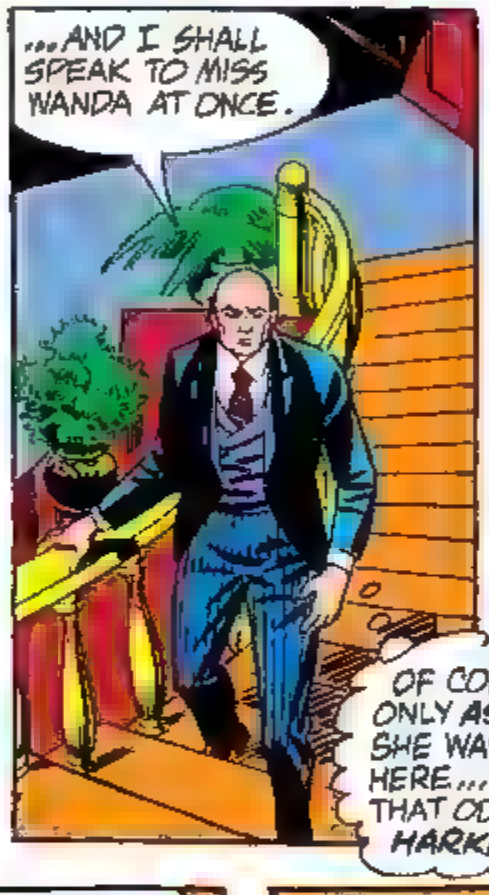
LIBRA HAS ESCAPED!

"YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT--OUR MAN FROM ZODIAC! AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, HE SURRENDERED TO THE POLICE..." *
*AS DEPICTED IN AVENGERS, #125. --ROY.

"...AND, SINCE THEN, HE'S BEEN A MODEL PRISONER WHILE AWAITING TRIAL. WE'VE TAKEN IT EASY WITH HIM, SINCE HE'S BLIND AND ALL...

"BUT THIS MORNING, WE WISHED WE HADN'T...!"
SOUND THE ALARM! I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DID IT--
--BUT THAT LIBRA JOKER'S GONE!

WE STILL DON'T KNOW HOW HE DID IT, OF COURSE... BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT.
POINT BEING: WE NEED ASSISTANCE ON THIS THING. IF LIBRA TRIES TO HELP THE REST OF THAT ZODIAC BUNCH BREAK JAIL --
I FOLLOW YOUR MEANING, SIR...


...AND I SHALL SPEAK TO MISS WANDA AT ONCE.
OF COURSE, I ONLY ASSUMED SHE WAS STILL HERE...SHE AND THAT ODD MISS HARKNESS!

I MYSELF HAVEN'T SEEN EITHER OF THEM IN--
MISS WANDA? MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU, PLEASE?
NOK NOK

M-MERCIFUL HEAVENS! M-MISS WANDA--?
GET AWAY FROM THIS DOOR, JARVIS! AS YOU VALUE YOUR WRETCHED LIFE-- GET FAR AWAY!!

THAT WAS HER VOICE... I KNOW IT WAS!
YET, IT WAS ALSO THE VOICE...OF SOMEONE ELSE...
...SOMEONE NOT HUMAN!!

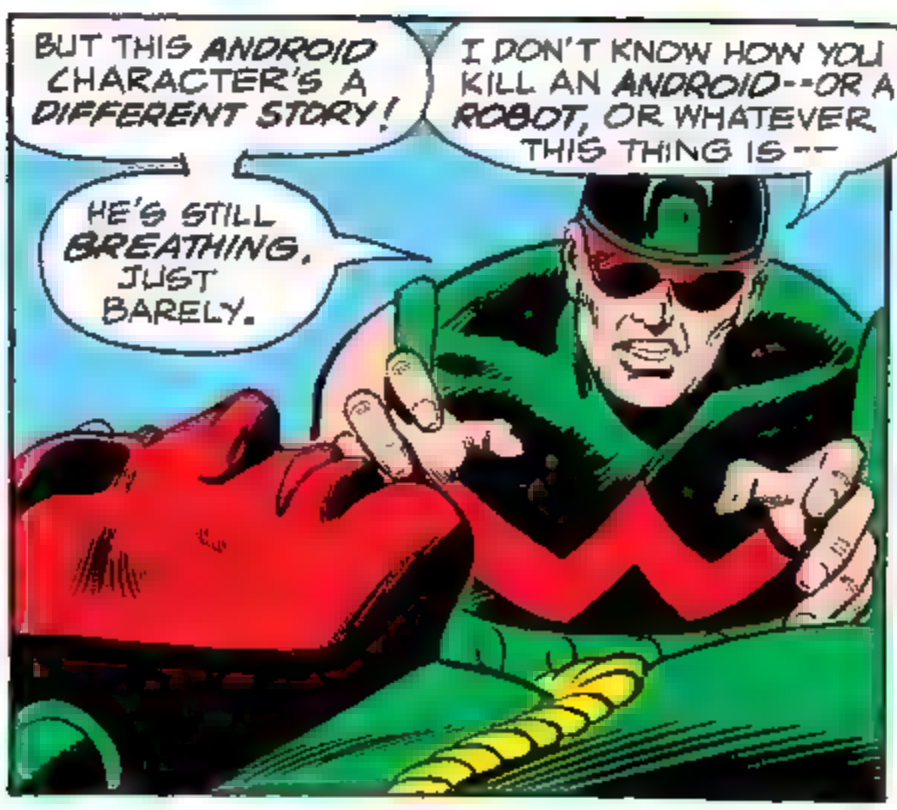
SO MUCH FOR THE REAL WORLD FOR THIS ISSUE! MEANWHILE --
BLAST! NONE OF THIS MAKES ANY SENSE!
NOW WHAT'RE YOU RANTING ABOUT, WONDER MAN?

I'LL TELL YOU: I'M RANTING ABOUT HOW WE'RE TREKKING ALL OVER LIMBO-LAND, LOOKING FOR A LOUSY ANDROID...
...A THING THAT ISN'T EVEN A MAN!
JUST KEEP TREKKING, GUY--
--BEFORE I RAM A FIREBALL DOWN YOUR THROAT!
HUH? NO NEED FOR YOU TO GET SORE, FELLA. YOU'RE THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH, RIGHT?
I READ ALL ABOUT YOU IN THE COMICS BACK WHEN I WAS A KID.
THOSE WERE JUST... STORIES.
WHAT'S THAT MEAN? I--UH OH! NOW WHAT?

HEY NOW! "THE RETURN OF FRANKENSTEIN"--WITH THAT VISION GUY THAT KANG DESCRIBED!
WE'VE WON, TORCH--WE'VE WON!
THEN WHY DO I FEEL AS IF--WE'VE LOST?

DON'T LET FLAME-FACE GET YOU DOWN, FRANKY!
JUST EASE THE VISION UP ON THAT SLAB, AND STAND BACK, OKAY?

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS, TORCH... I DON'T LIKE TO GET TOO CLOSE TO THINGS THAT AREN'T EVEN HUMAN.

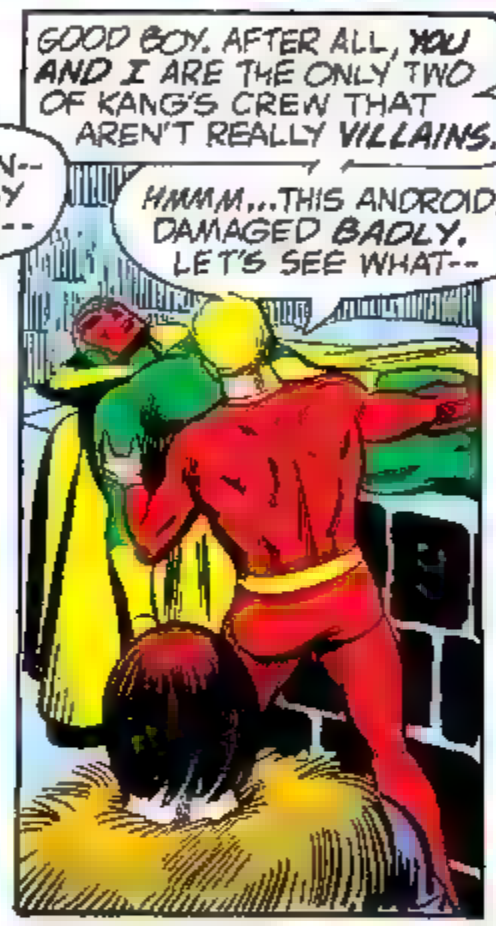

BUT THIS ANDROID CHARACTER'S A DIFFERENT STORY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU KILL AN ANDROID--OR A ROBOT, OR WHATEVER THIS THING IS--
HE'S STILL BREATHING, JUST BARELY.

--BUT I'M SURE GOING TO--
OOWW
RRR

THRU A PAIN-WRACKED THROAT, THE MONSTER SPEAKS AT LAST...
YOU--WILL NOT--HURT HIM--!
Y-YEAH, SURE--ANYTHING YOU SAY--JUST LET GO!

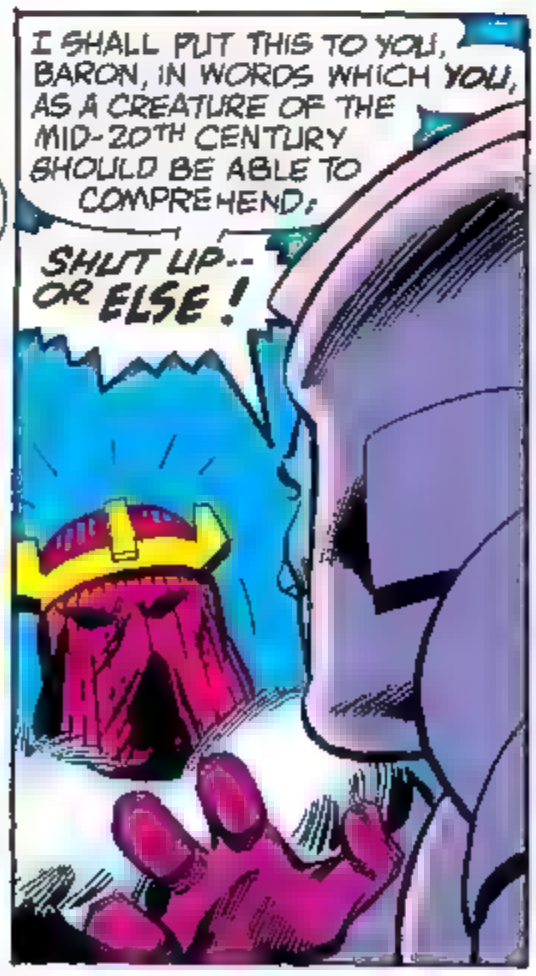
Whew!: I MAY BE AS STRONG AS ANY OF THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS... BUT THAT CAT HAD LEVERAGE THAT WOULDN'T QUIT!
WHAT MADE HIM ACT UP LIKE THAT?
PERHAPS, BEING A UNIQUE FORM OF HALF-LIFE...
...HE IS CONSUMED WITH CURIOSITY ABOUT ONE WHO HOVERS BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

SAVE THE PHILOSOPHY, TORCH! I'M FINDING KANG. HE'LL TAKE CARE OF BOTH OF YOU!
FRANKENSTEIN--IF YOU GO BY THAT NAME--
--I'D LIKE A CLOSER LOOK-SEE AT THE VISION, OKAY?

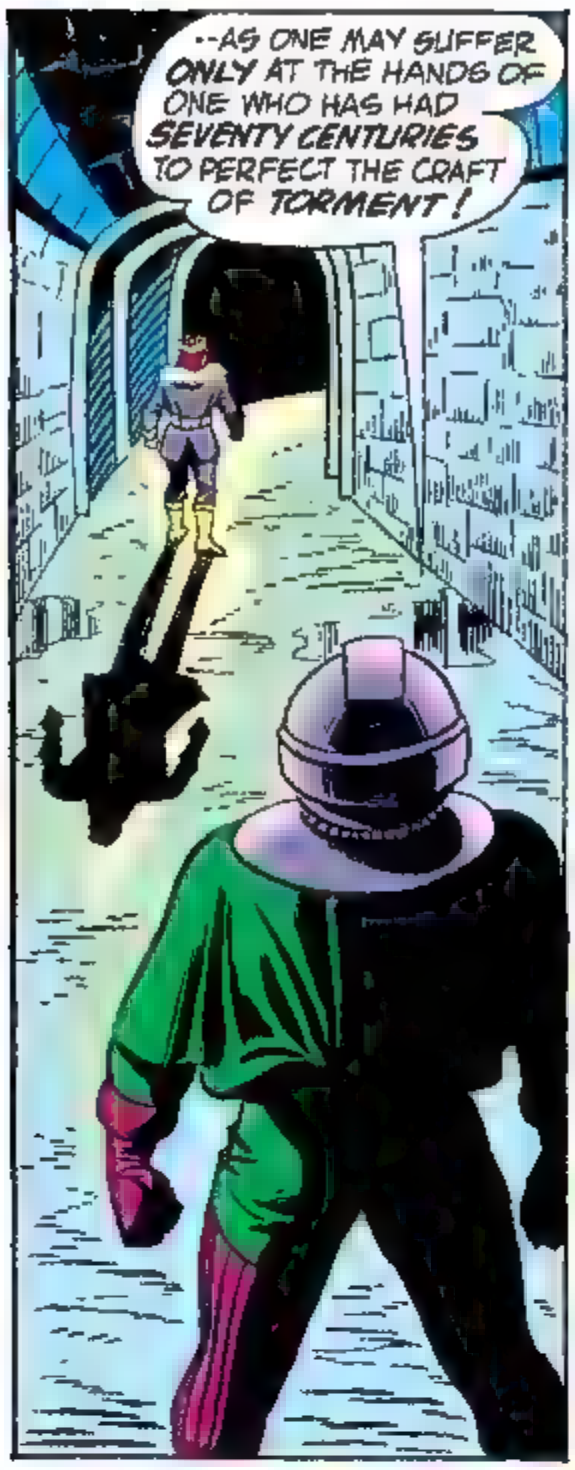

GOOD BOY. AFTER ALL, YOU AND I ARE THE ONLY TWO OF KANG'S CREW THAT AREN'T REALLY VILLAINS.
HMMM...THIS ANDROID'S DAMAGED BADLY. LET'S SEE WHAT--

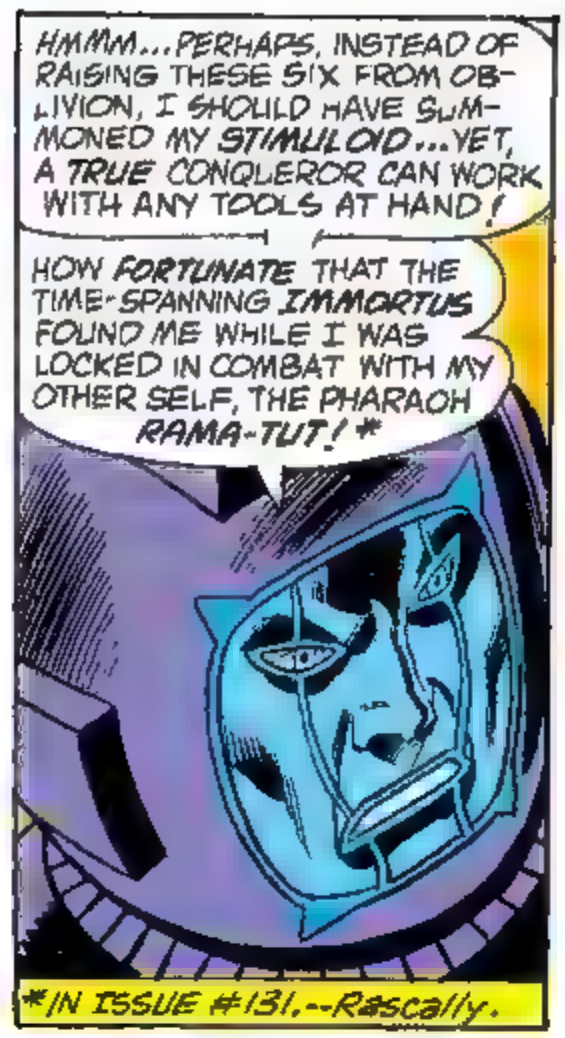
GOOD LORD!
MAYBE--I SUSPECTED IT ALL ALONG--BUT I COULDN'T ADMIT IT--EVEN TO MYSELF!
THIS IS--BEYOND BELIEF!

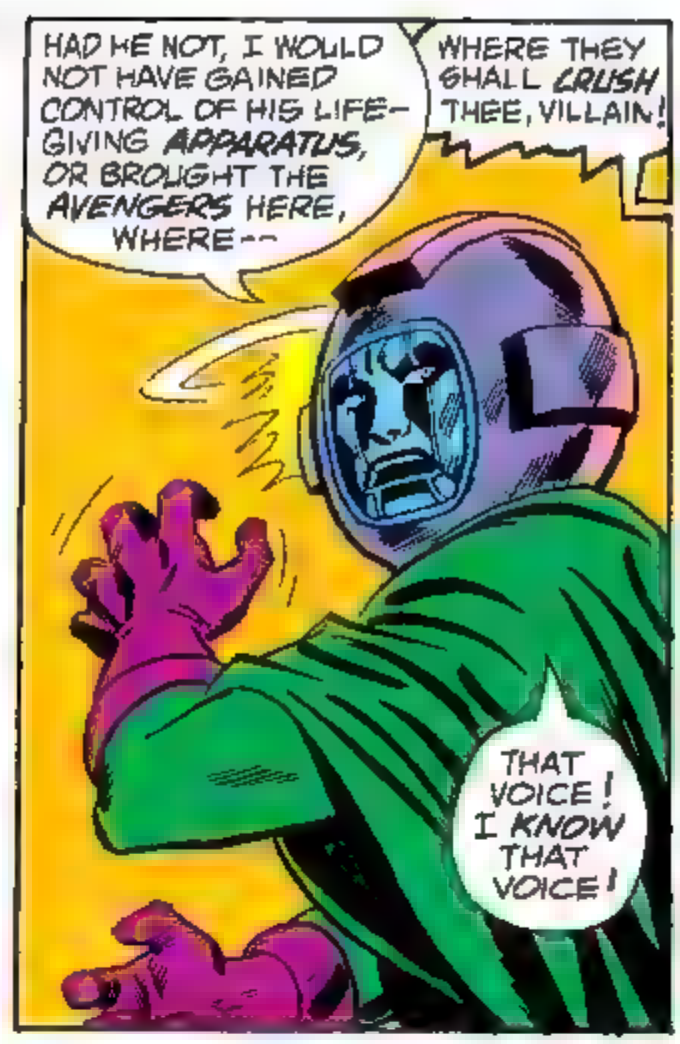
HONEST, FRIEND--THE TORCH'S IS ONE SECRET WE'LL LEARN THIS ISSUE! BUT FIRST--
IF I COULD ONLY GET MY HANDS ON CAPTAIN AMERICA--THAT STAR-SPANGLED SCHWEIN-HUND!
YOU'RE STILL RAVING!


I SHALL PUT THIS TO YOU, BARON, IN WORDS WHICH YOU, AS A CREATURE OF THE MID-20TH CENTURY SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND:
SHUT UP--OR ELSE!

THAT'S BETTER. NOW, RETURN TO IMMORTUS' THRONE ROOM, AND MAKE CERTAIN THAT HE AND RAMA-TUT HAVE NOT ESCAPED!
AND I WARN YOU, DO NOT SEEK TO BETRAY ME, OR YOU SHALL SUFFER--


--AS ONE MAY SUFFER ONLY AT THE HANDS OF ONE WHO HAS HAD SEVENTY CENTURIES TO PERFECT THE CRAFT OF TORMENT!


HMMM...PERHAPS, INSTEAD OF RAISING THESE SIX FROM OBLIVION, I SHOULD HAVE SUMMONED MY STIMULOID...YET, A TRUE CONQUEROR CAN WORK WITH ANY TOOLS AT HAND!
HOW FORTUNATE THAT THE TIME-SPANNING IMMORTUS FOUND ME WHILE I WAS LOCKED IN COMBAT WITH MY OTHER SELF, THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT!*
*IN ISSUE #131.--Rascally.


HAD HE NOT, I WOULD NOT HAVE GAINED CONTROL OF HIS LIFE-GIVING APPARATUS, OR BROUGHT THE AVENGERS HERE, WHERE--
WHERE THEY SHALL CRUSH THEE, VILLAIN!
THAT VOICE! I KNOW THAT VOICE!

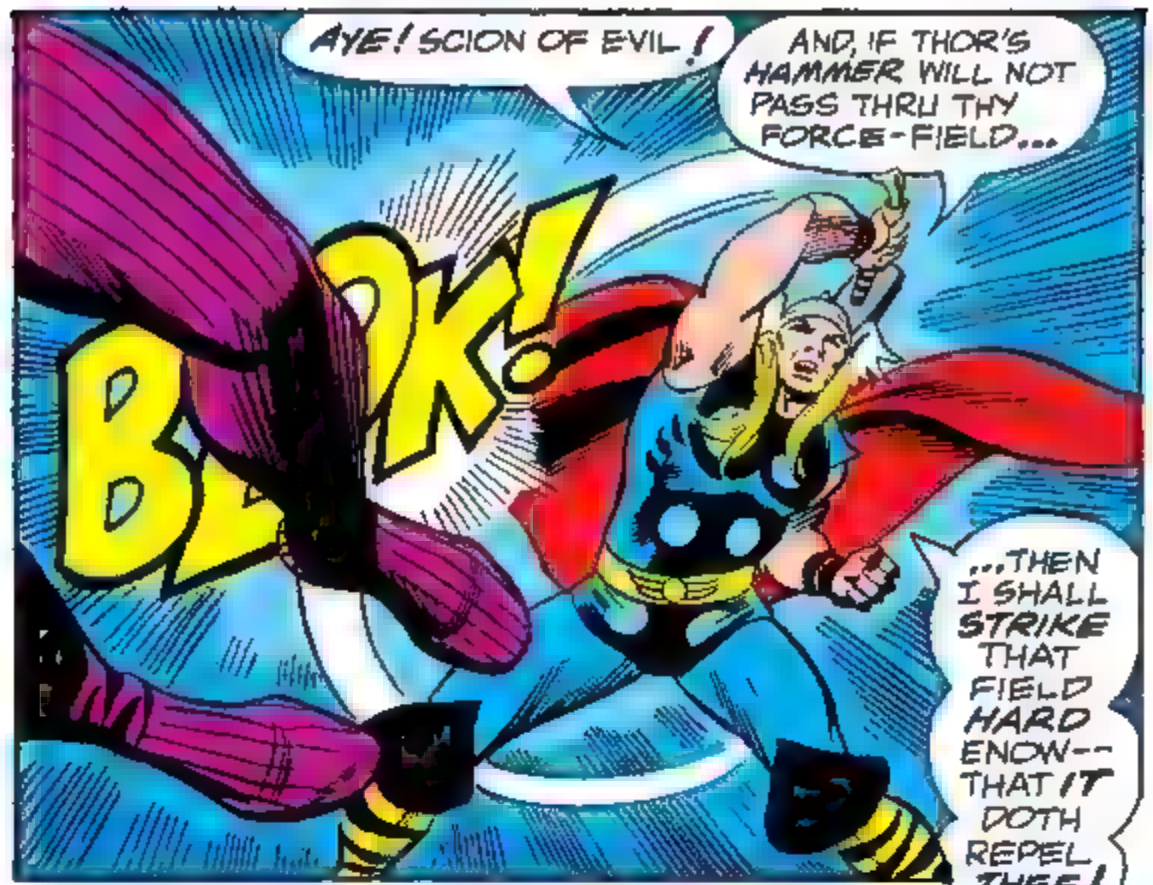
THOR!
AND JUST WHEN ALL MY MINIONS ARE FAR FROM ME!
THEY'D HELP THEE NOT, FIEND...

...NOT 'GAINST ONE WHO WOULD AVENGE A COMRADE SLAIN!
PHOW!
SLAIN? THEN--ONE OF THOSE FOOLS HAS SUCCEEDED!?

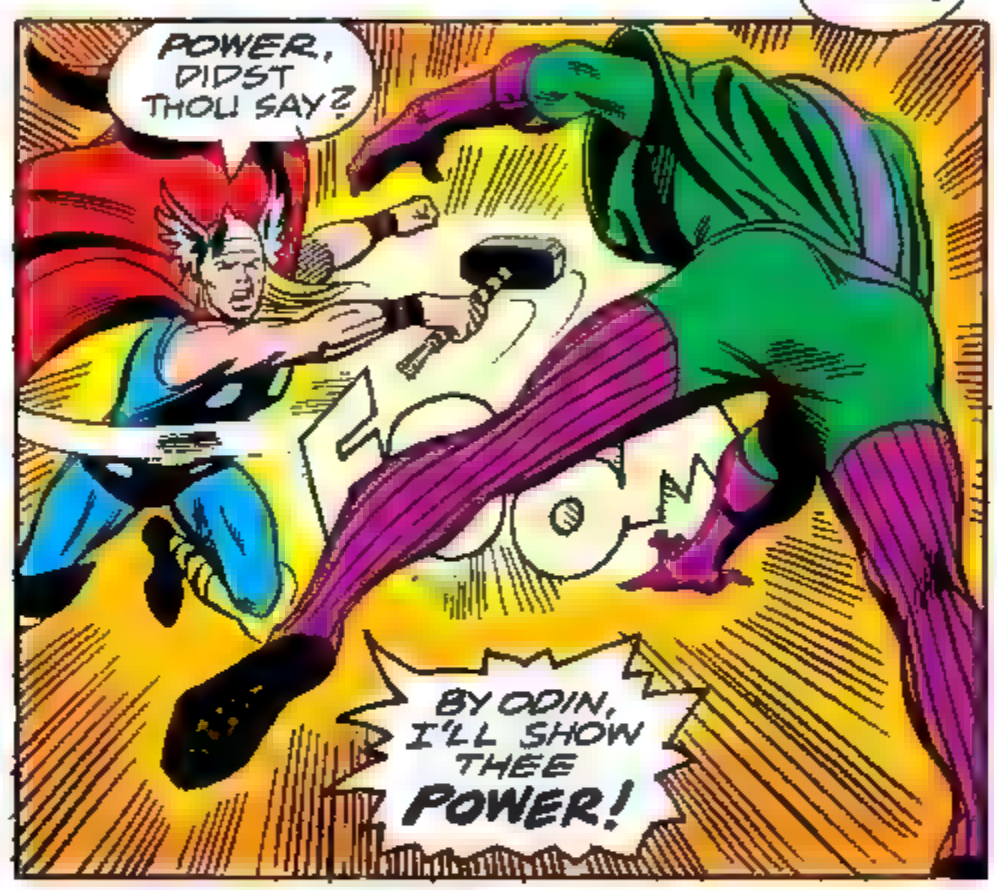
DO NOT LOOK SO SURPRISED, ASGARDIAN.
DID YOU THINK I HAD NO PORTABLE FORCE-FIELD?
THEN RISE--AND FIGHT!

FIGHT? NO, I THINK NOT.
WHAT USE HAS KANG FOR LOCKING IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT WITH A GOD OF THE FORGOTTEN, PAGAN PAST--
≥UNNH!≤

--WHEN HE HAS ALL THE WIZARDRY OF 40th CENTURY SCIENCE AT HIS FINGERTIPS?
WHAT--? YOU'RE STILL COMING! YOU'RE STILL COMING!!


AYE! SCION OF EVIL!
AND, IF THOR'S HAMMER WILL NOT PASS THRU THY FORCE-FIELD...
...THEN I SHALL STRIKE THAT FIELD HARD ENOW--THAT IT DOTH REPEL THEE!

NO! IT WILL NOT HAPPEN THIS WAY--THE WAY RAMA-TUT PREDICTED.
I MUST WIN THRU--GAIN THE CELESTIAL MADONNA--SO THAT SHE CAN BEAR MY SON!
I SHALL RULE THE EARTH THRU HIM--
FOR, HE SHALL BE THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH!


POWER, DIDST THOU SAY?
BY ODIN, I'LL SHOW THEE POWER!

ONCE MORE I SAY IT--ARISE, AND FACE THINE ORDAINED FATE!
FATE? YES--FATE IS ON THE MARCH--

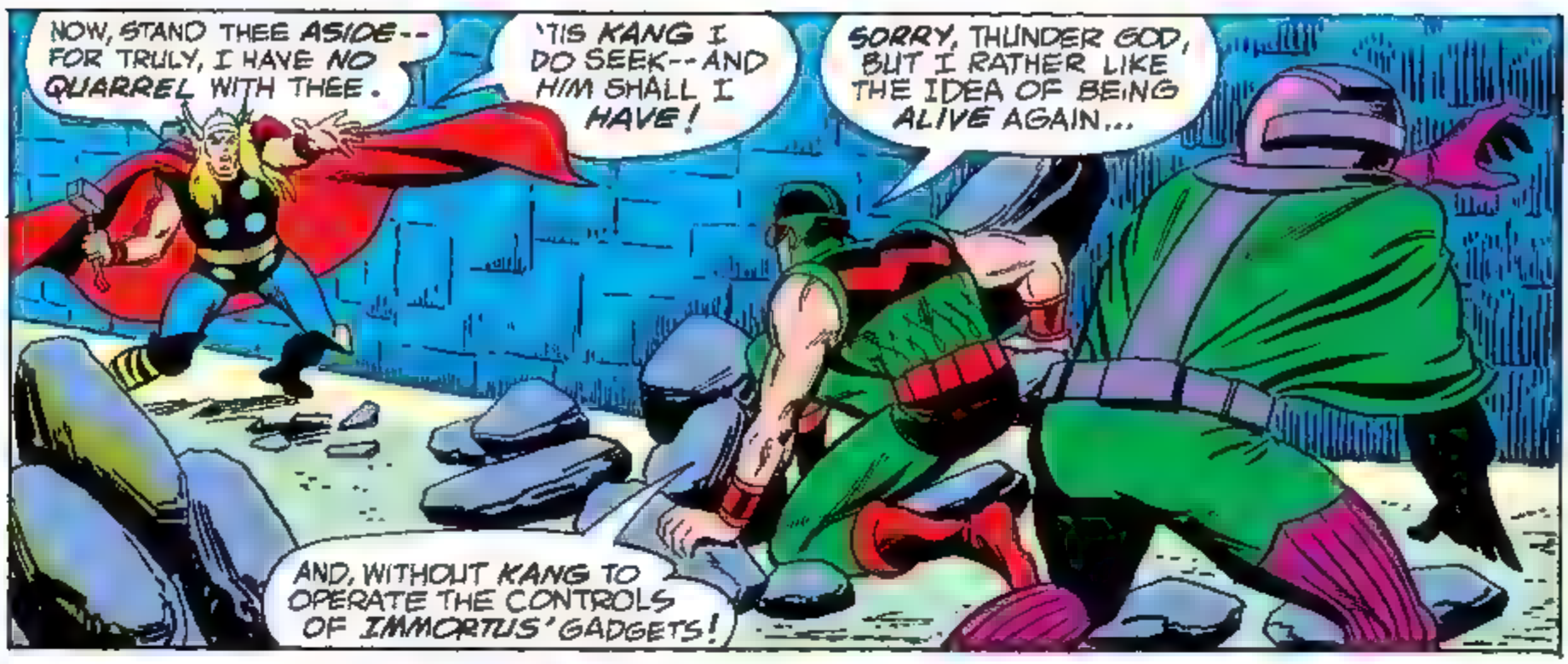
--BUT IT SHALL BE YOURS, NOT MINE!

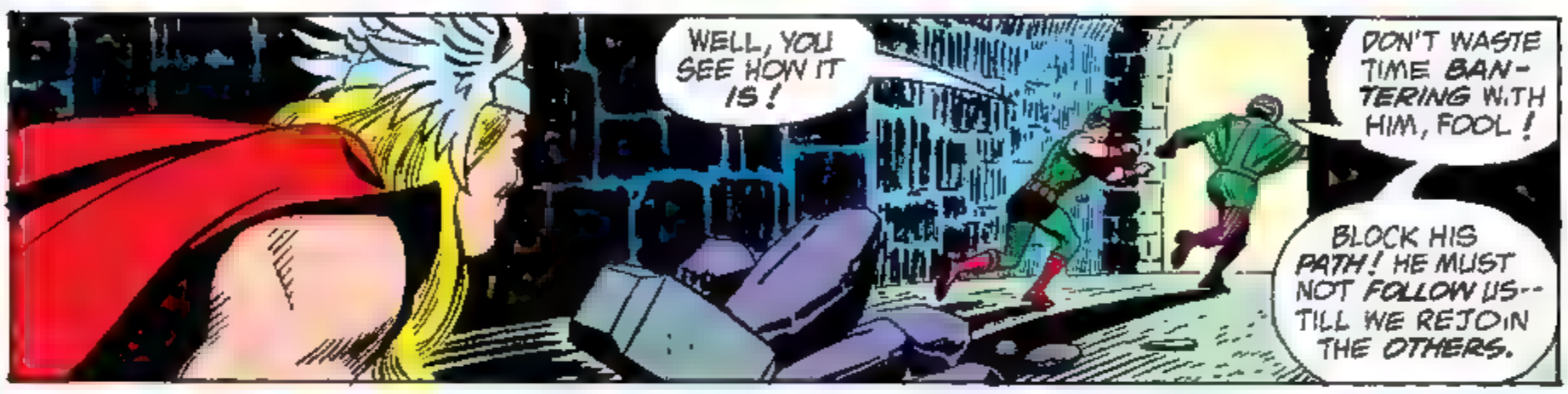
SO, KANG--THOU HAST CALLED FORTH WONDER MAN FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE...
...AND MADE OF HIM A PAWN, AS WELL!
I'M NOBODY'S PAWN, GOLDILOCKS.

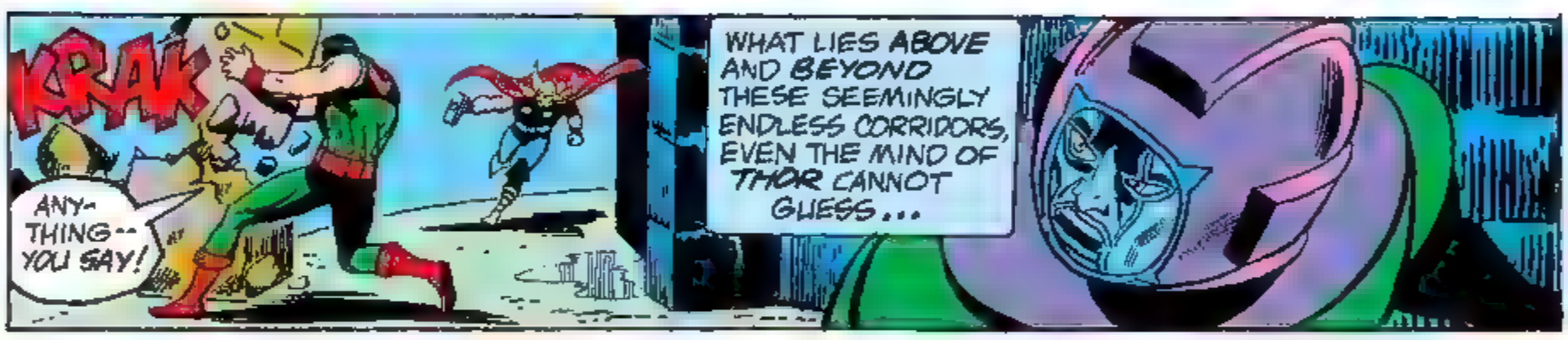
DO YOU HEAR ME ??

NOBODY'S!

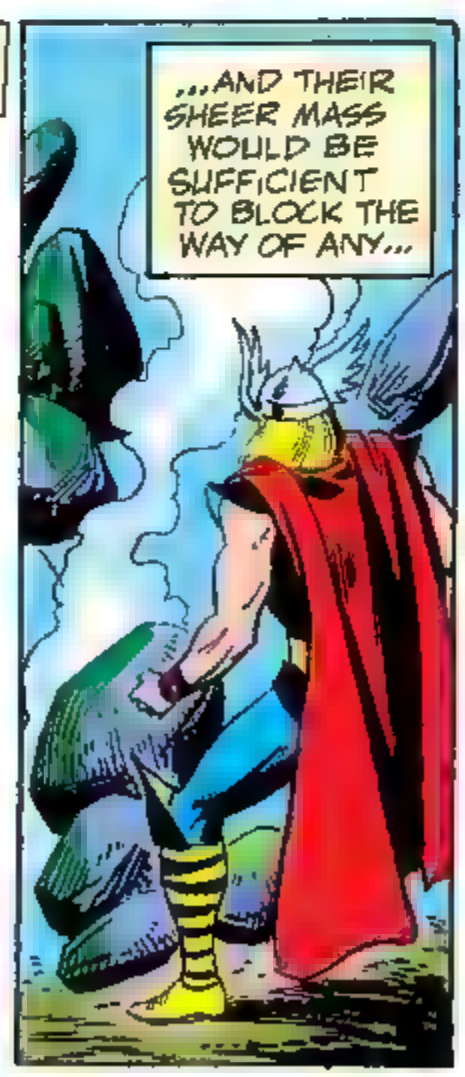
* NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE "FOOM" ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE. --UNSIGNED.


NOW, STAND THEE ASIDE-- FOR TRULY, I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THEE.
'TIS KANG I DO SEEK--AND HIM SHALL I HAVE!
SORRY, THUNDER GOD, BUT I RATHER LIKE THE IDEA OF BEING ALIVE AGAIN...
AND, WITHOUT KANG TO OPERATE THE CONTROLS OF IMMORTUS' GADGETS!

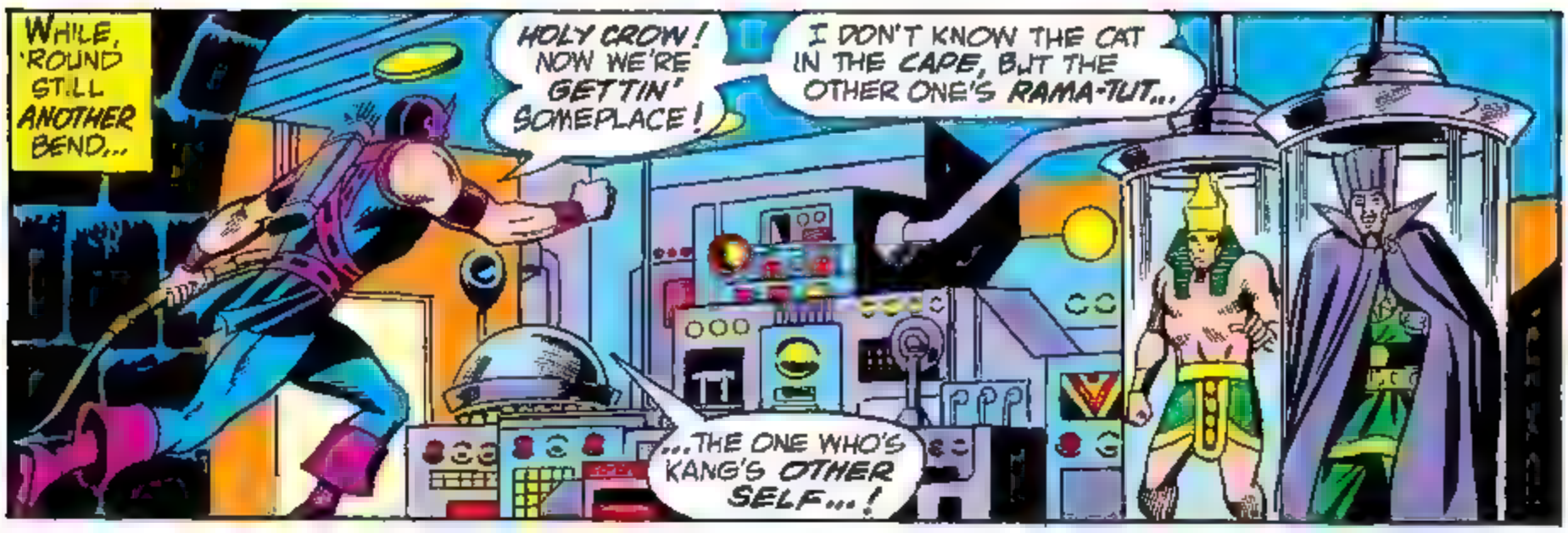

WELL, YOU SEE HOW IT IS!
DON'T WASTE TIME BANTERING WITH HIM, FOOL!
BLOCK HIS PATH! HE MUST NOT FOLLOW US-- TILL WE REJOIN THE OTHERS.

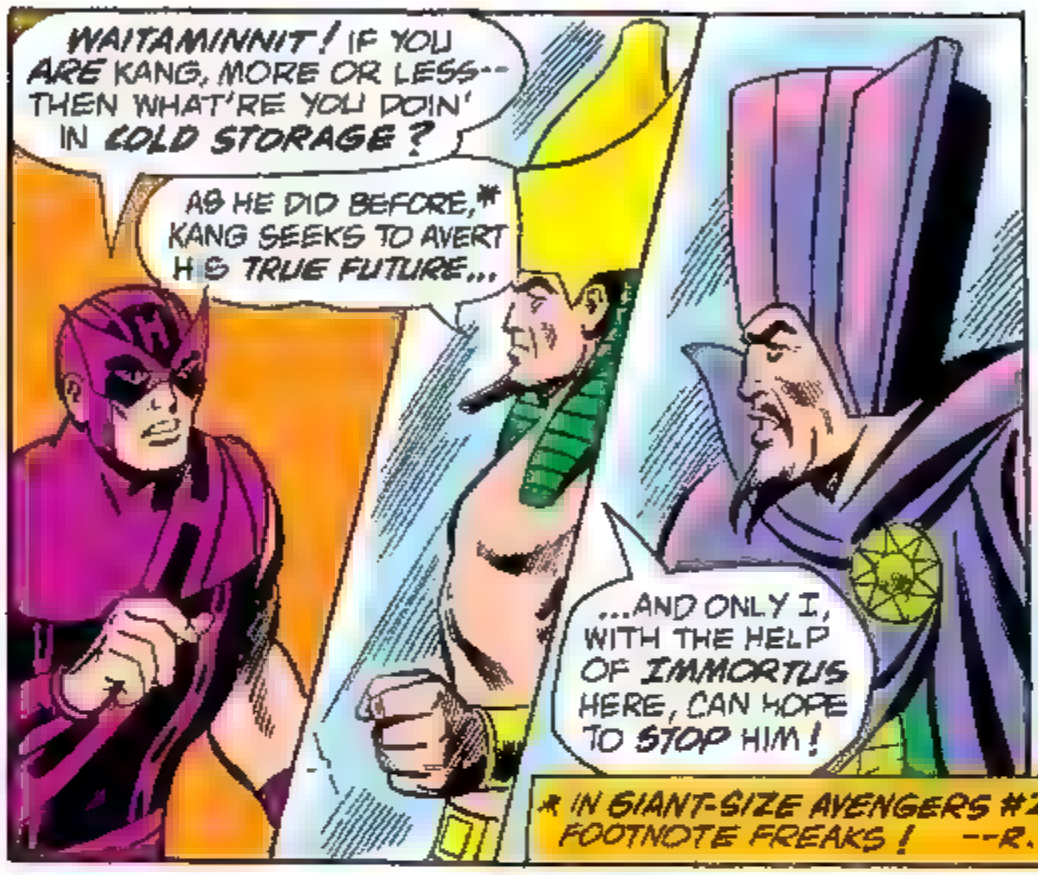

KRAK
ANY-THING-- YOU SAY!
WHAT LIES ABOVE AND BEYOND THESE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS CORRIDORS, EVEN THE MIND OF THOR CANNOT GUESS...

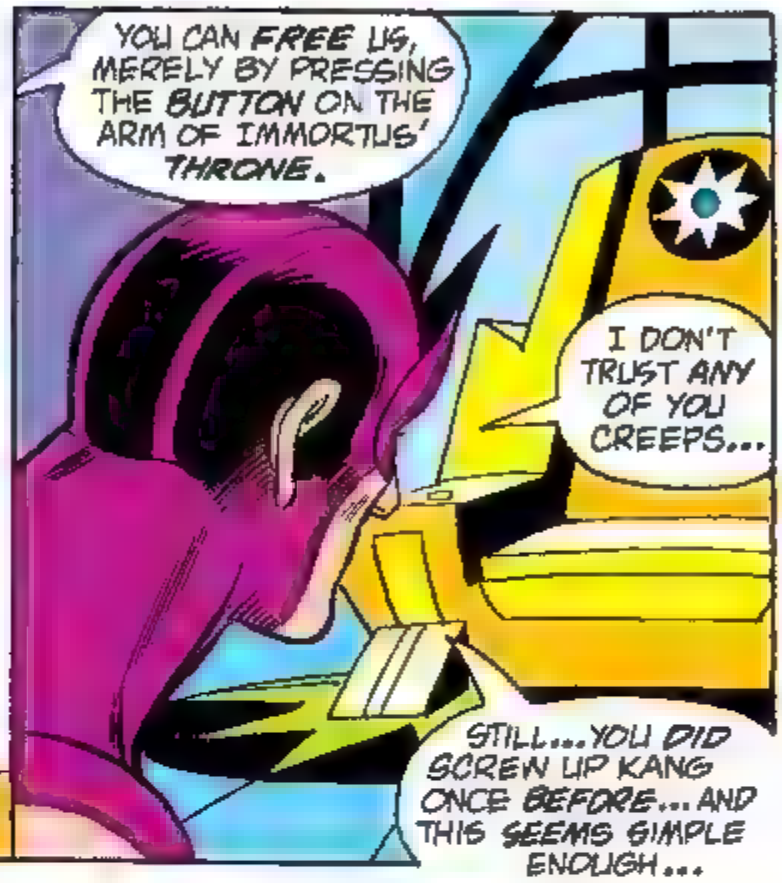
YET, WHEN THEIR SUPPORTS ARE REMOVED, THESE STONES STILL FALL...

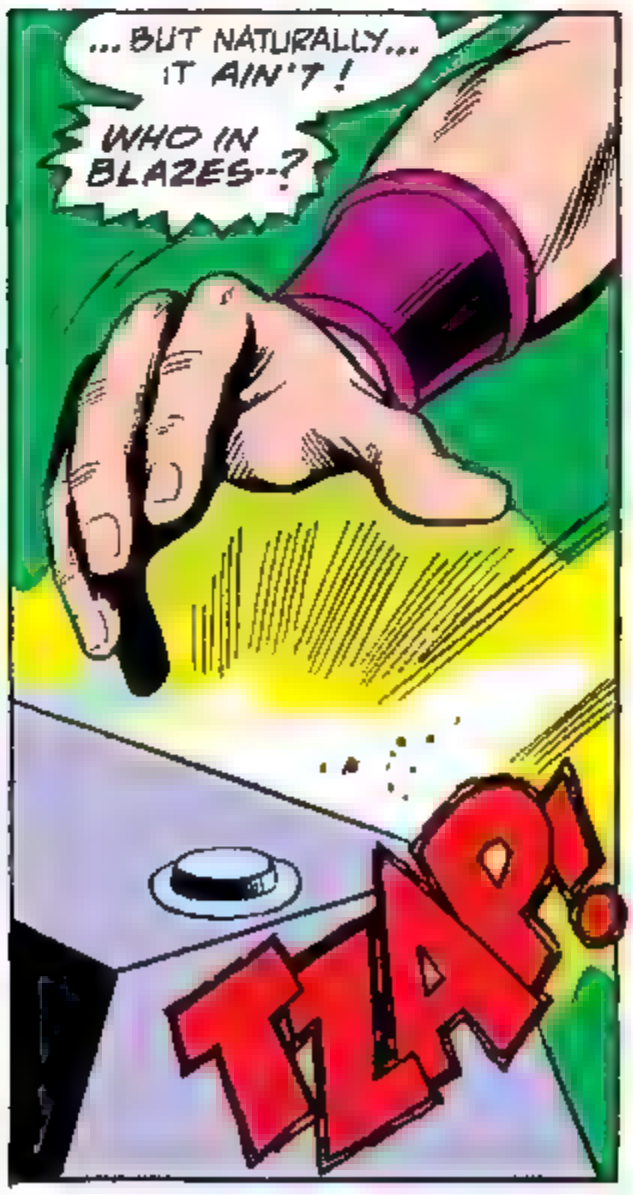

...AND THEIR SHEER MASS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO BLOCK THE WAY OF ANY...

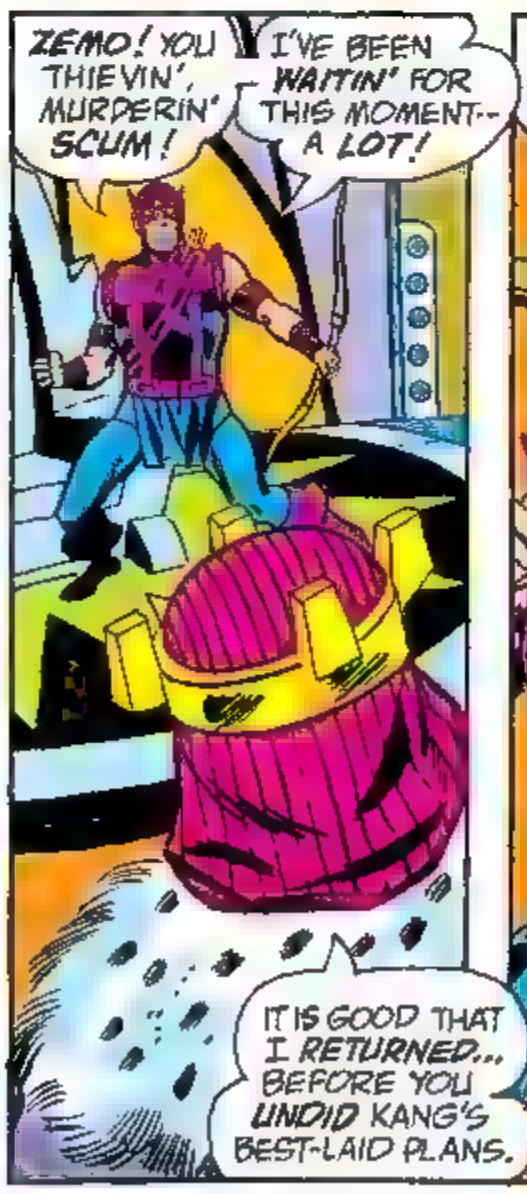
...WHO DID NOT POSSESS THE MYSTIC MALLET CALLED MJOLNIR!*
PTHAN
* AN ASIDE TO NIT-PICKERS: YES, WE KNOW THAT THE NAME OF THOR'S HAMMER CAN ALSO BE SPELLED "MJOLLNER"--BUT WHO ARE WE TO ARGUE WITH LAROUSSE AND CO.? -- ROY.


WHILE, 'ROUND STILL ANOTHER BEND...
HOLY CROW! NOW WE'RE GETTIN' SOMEPLACE!
I DON'T KNOW THE CAT IN THE CAPE, BUT THE OTHER ONE'S RAMA-TUT...
...THE ONE WHO'S KANG'S OTHER SELF...!


WAITAMINNIT! IF YOU ARE KANG, MORE OR LESS-- THEN WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' IN COLD STORAGE?
AS HE DID BEFORE,* KANG SEEKS TO AVERT HIS TRUE FUTURE...
...AND ONLY I, WITH THE HELP OF IMMORTUS HERE, CAN HOPE TO STOP HIM!
* IN GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #2, FOOTNOTE FREAKS! --R.


YOU CAN FREE US, MERELY BY PRESSING THE BUTTON ON THE ARM OF IMMORTUS' THRONE.
I DON'T TRUST ANY OF YOU CREEPS...
STILL...YOU DID SCREW UP KANG ONCE BEFORE... AND THIS SEEMS SIMPLE ENOUGH...


...BUT NATURALLY... IT AIN'T!
WHO IN BLAZES--?
TZAP!


ZEMO! YOU THIEVIN', MURDERIN' SCUM!
I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR THIS MOMENT-- A LOT!
IT IS GOOD THAT I RETURNED... BEFORE YOU UNDID KANG'S BEST-LAID PLANS.

YEAH? WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YA, SACK-HEAD.
I STILL INTEND TO--

WHAT YOU INTEND, BOWMAN, AND WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DO...
PAUK
PAUK
...ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE SAME!

CORRECTION, ZEMO! AS LONG AS I CAN STRING 'EM FASTER THAN YOU CAN BLAST 'EM--
--IT'S STILL MY BALL GAME!

NEXT, LET'S HAVE THAT LITTLE JOY-BUZZER-- BEFORE YOU HURT YOURSELF!
THAT'S A PLEASURE I WANT TO RESERVE FOR MYSELF!
OWWW! LEAVE THE HAND, YOU CRETIN!

DON'T PUSH ME! JUST BE GLAD I REMEMBERED I AIN'T THE MURDERIN' KIND!
AFTER WHAT YOU CREEPS DID TO IRON MAN--
LUCKY FOR YOU, I KNOW YOU'RE NUTHIN' BUT KANG'S PUPPET!
SOME THINGS I CAN DO FOR MYSELF, ARCHER!

...ESPECIALLY SINCE I WAS BURIED WITH THIS PISTOL FILLED WITH MY MIRACULOUS ADHESIVE X!*
*ZEMO WAS OBVIOUSLY CARRYING A SPARE WHEN AN AVALANCHE DID HIM IN, BACK IN AVENGERS #15. --ROY.
PHOOOP

YOU LOUSY--! WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON YOU--
YOU SHALL NOT-- NOT EVER!
MY INSTANTLY-HARDENING PASTE WILL HOLD YOU UNTIL YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A ROTTED CORPSE.
AND, IN YOUR DYING HOURS, YOU WILL KNOW THE TORMENT I HAVE FELT--

--I, WHO SPENT THE FINAL TWO DECADES OF MY LIFE WITH THIS ACCURSED MASK STUCK FOREVER TO MY FACE-- THANKS TO THE HATED CAPTAIN AMERICA!

WHY DONTCHA JUST ZAP ME AND GET IT OVER WITH, MAN FROM GLAD!
ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN LISTENIN' TO YOU WARMED-OVER NAZIS SOUNDIN' OFF!

BE STILL, DO YOU HEAR? IF YOU KNEW WHAT IT MEANT--TO GO THRU LIFE, A FACELESS MAN--!
PERHAPS... I CAN HELP YOU, BARON.

HELP ME?

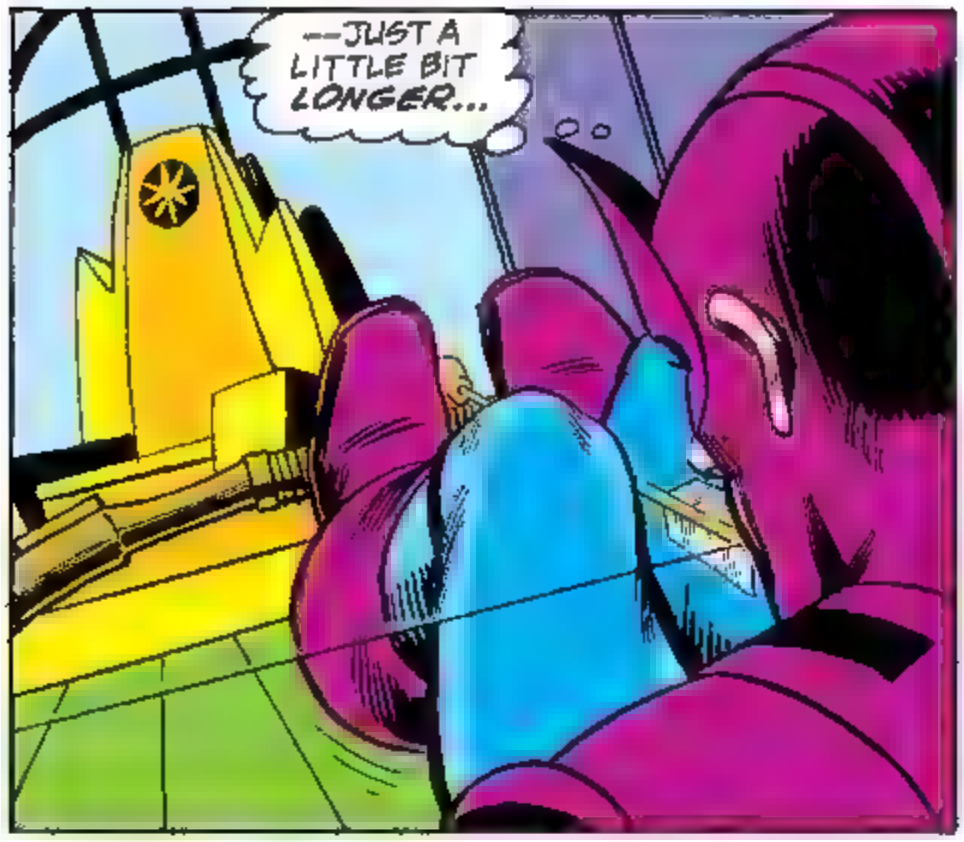
MEANWHILE (AS THEY SAY IN THE FUNNY-BOOKS)...
LOOK--I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THIS, BECAUSE I'M NOT SURE I DO--
--BUT, I SAW SOMETHING WHEN I EXAMINED THAT ANDROID!

I KNOW THAT BODY! IT'S CRIMSON NOW--BUT SOMEHOW, BY SOME INSANE TRICK OF FATE--IT'S MINE!
I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY--BUT THAT'S ME ON THAT SLAB--ME, AS I WOULD HAVE BEEN!
AND, THAT SECOND "ME" IS DYING--A SECOND TIME!
YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME DO WHAT I CAN TO SAVE HIM! YOU'VE GOT TO!

PERHAPS THE MONSTER COMPREHENDS...AND PERHAPS NOT.
AT ANY RATE, HE SLOWLY NODS.

AS...
YOU MEAN--YOU CAN HELP ME, IMMORTUS? HOW?
I AM THE TOTAL MASTER OF TIME!
I CAN SEND YOU BACK--BACK TO BEFORE THE MASK ADHERED TO YOUR SKIN--
--SO YOU MAY AVOID THAT TRAGEDY.

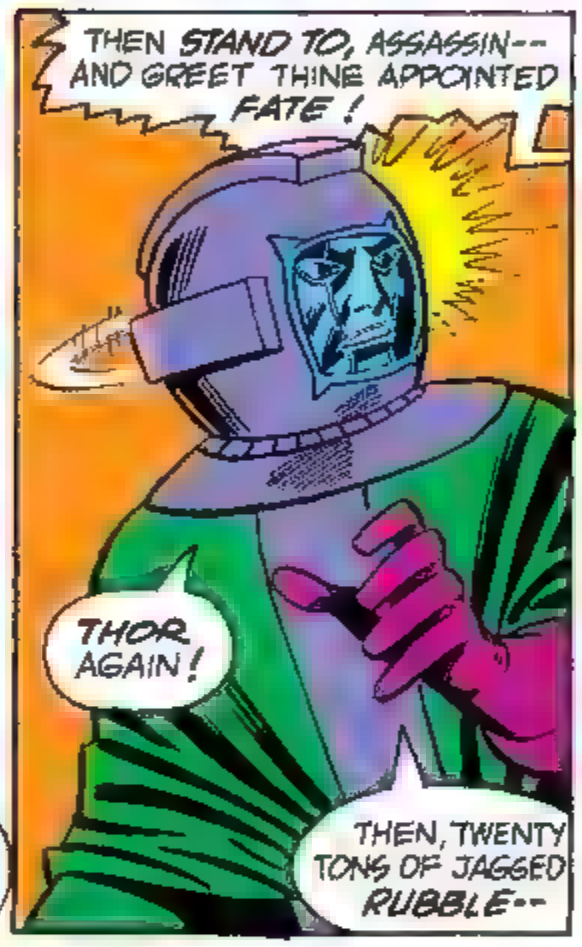
HE'S LAPPIN' IT UP, IMMORTUS-BABY!
KEEP ON JAWIN'--


--JUST A LITTLE BIT LONGER...

EITHER THIS IS GONNA BE THE GREATEST BANK-SHOT OF MY CHECKERED CAREER...
C'MON, TEETH O' MINE--DON'T COME OUT FOR JUST A FEW SECONDS MORE--
...OR ELSE IT'LL BE THE LAST!

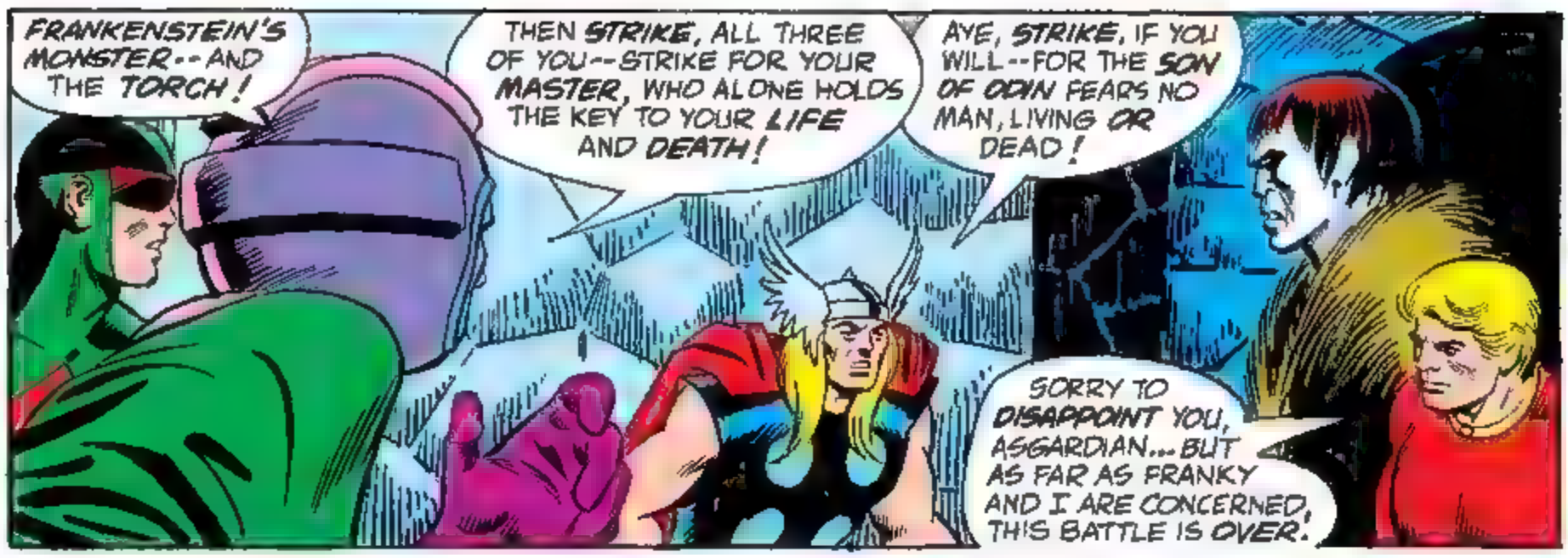
--AND WE'LL BE THERE, KANG.
THAT MONSTER WAS CARRYING THE VISION LIKE A BROKEN TOY, I TELL YOU!
YOU HAD BETTER BE TELLING THE TRUTH, SIMON WILLIAMS...

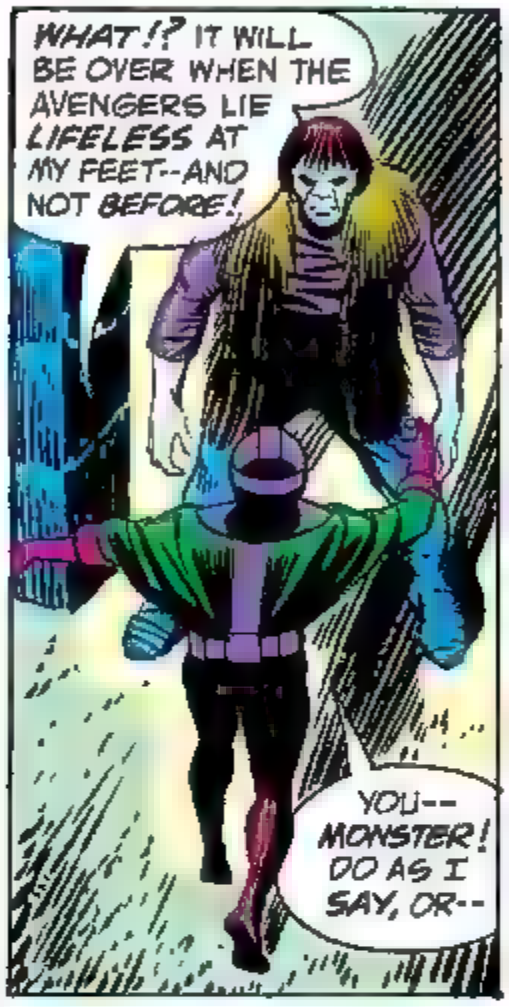
FOR, I BEGIN TO DOUBT MY WISDOM IN REVIVING YOU SIX INCOMPETENTS.
ALSO, I GROW WEARY OF THIS MARCHING TO AND FRO, THRU ENDLESS TUNNELS...
...WEARY AT THE LACK OF SCENERY...THE MINDLESS MONOTONY...!

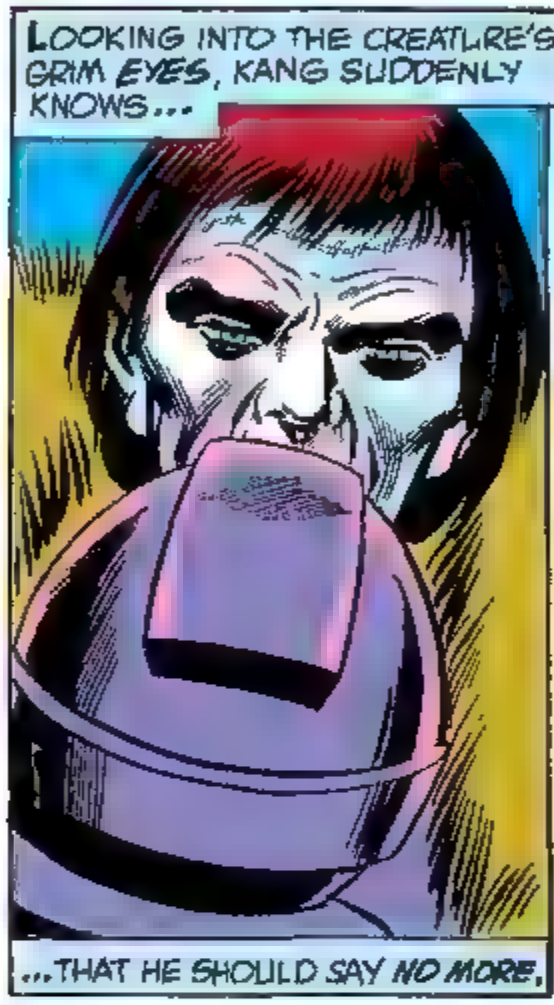

THEN STAND TO, ASSASSIN-- AND GREET THINE APPOINTED FATE!
THOR AGAIN!
THEN, TWENTY TONS OF JAGGED RUBBLE--

--WAS NOT ENOW TO KEEP ME FROM THEE, KANG!
VERILY, I DO SWEAR IT-- THERE SHALL COME NOW A RECKONING!
NOT QUITE! HOLD HIM BACK, WONDER MAN-- I MUST ESCAPE, FORM NEW PLANS--!

IT'S THOR WHO'D BETTER HAVE SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE, KANG.
LOOK!

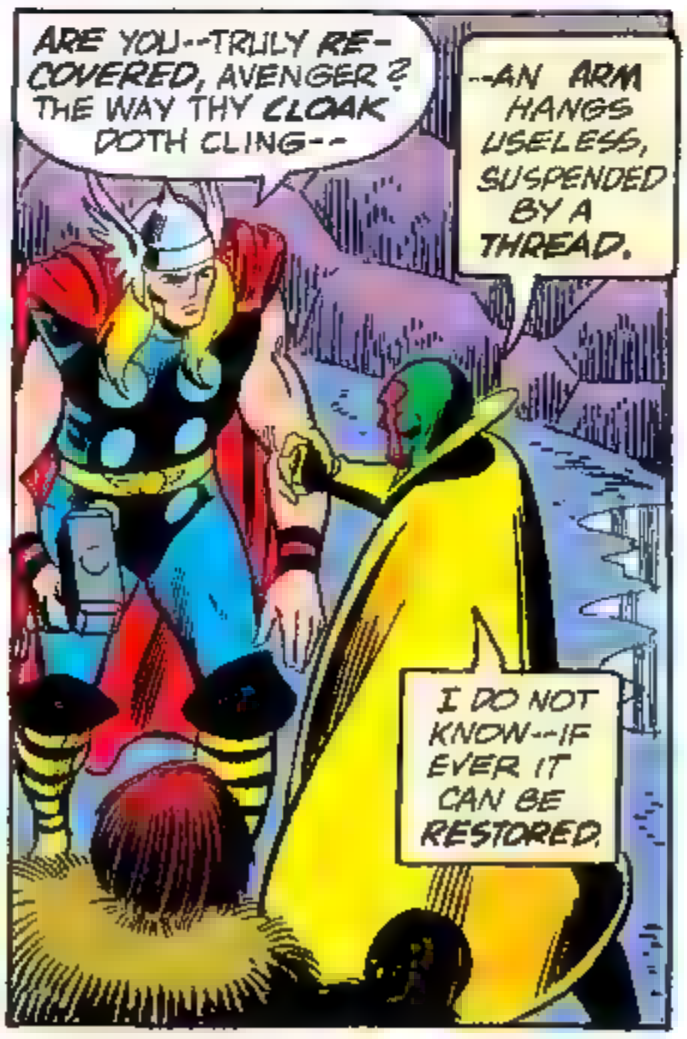

FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER--AND THE TORCH!
THEN STRIKE, ALL THREE OF YOU--STRIKE FOR YOUR MASTER, WHO ALONE HOLDS THE KEY TO YOUR LIFE AND DEATH!
AYE, STRIKE, IF YOU WILL--FOR THE SON OF ODIN FEARS NO MAN, LIVING OR DEAD!
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, ASGARDIAN... BUT AS FAR AS FRANKY AND I ARE CONCERNED, THIS BATTLE IS OVER!

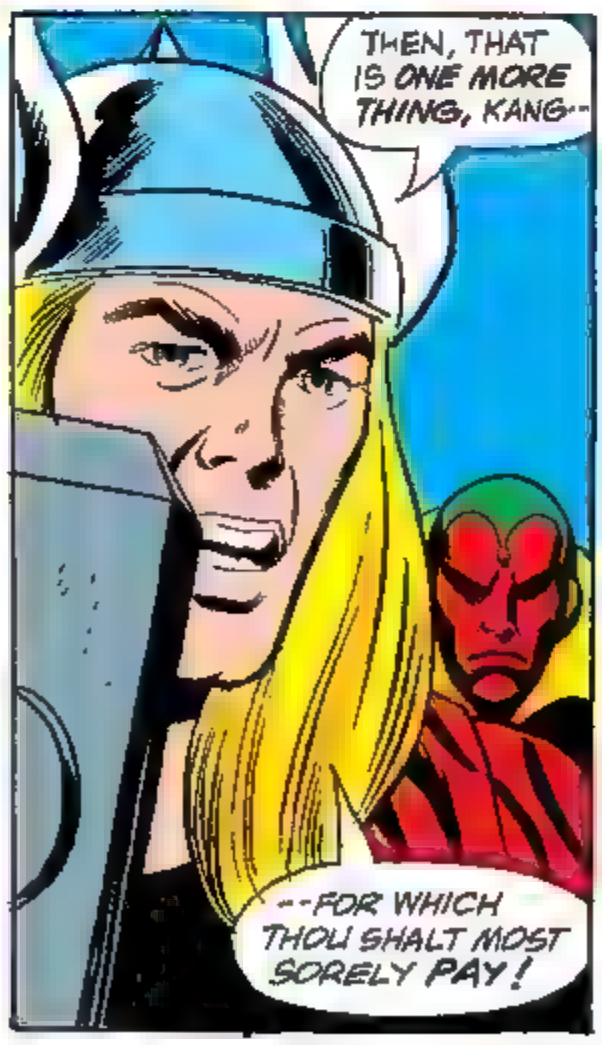

WHAT!? IT WILL BE OVER WHEN THE AVENGERS LIE LIFELESS AT MY FEET--AND NOT BEFORE!
YOU--MONSTER! DO AS I SAY, OR--


LOOKING INTO THE CREATURE'S GRIM EYES, KANG SUDDENLY KNOWS...
...THAT HE SHOULD SAY NO MORE.

THEN, ABRUPTLY, BOTH THE GIANT AND THE TORCH STEP ASIDE, TO REVEAL...
THE VISION--ALIVE!?
BUT--WONDER MAN SAID--
AND HE WAS CORRECT.

I WAS AT DEATH'S DOOR, FOR EVEN AN ANDROID CAN DIE, IN HIS WAY...
...TILL ONE CAME WHO KNEW HOW TO SAVE ME.


ARE YOU--TRULY RE-COVERED, AVENGER? THE WAY THY CLOAK DOTH CLING--
--AN ARM HANGS USELESS, SUSPENDED BY A THREAD.
I DO NOT KNOW--IF EVER IT CAN BE RESTORED.


THEN, THAT IS ONE MORE THING, KANG--
--FOR WHICH THOU SHALT MOST SORELY PAY!

COUNTDOWN: ONLY NINE PAGES LEFT TO THIS STORY, SO LET'S GET CRACKING, SHALL WE...?

THINK OF IT, ZEMO...

...TO BE ABLE TO UNDO THE WRONG THAT WAS DONE YOU...TO BE WHOLE AGAIN!

YOU HAVE BUT TO FREE ME, AND--

YES, YES-- I'LL DO IT--!

--BUT NOT TILL I HAVE PERMANENTLY DISPOSED OF THIS INFERNAL ARCH--

WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE REICH--?

BLAST! YOUR SHOUTIN' UPSET MY SHOT! I JUST HOPE THAT--

THAP!

FLAK!

YAHOOOO!

MINNESOTA FATS, HERE I COME!!

WHILE ZEMO NOW MUST RECKON WITH IMMORTUS!

AND WITH RAMA-TUT!

WAIT! MY FACE--!

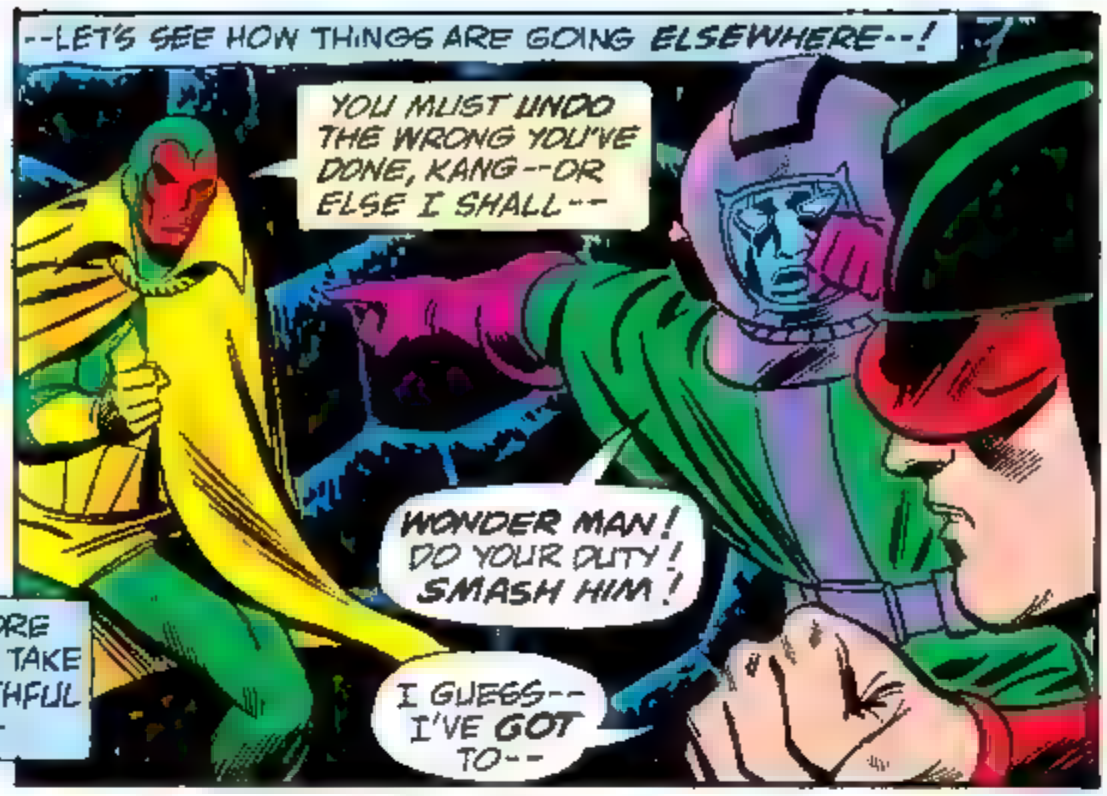
YOU SWORE-- YOU'D MAKE ME WHOLE AGAIN!

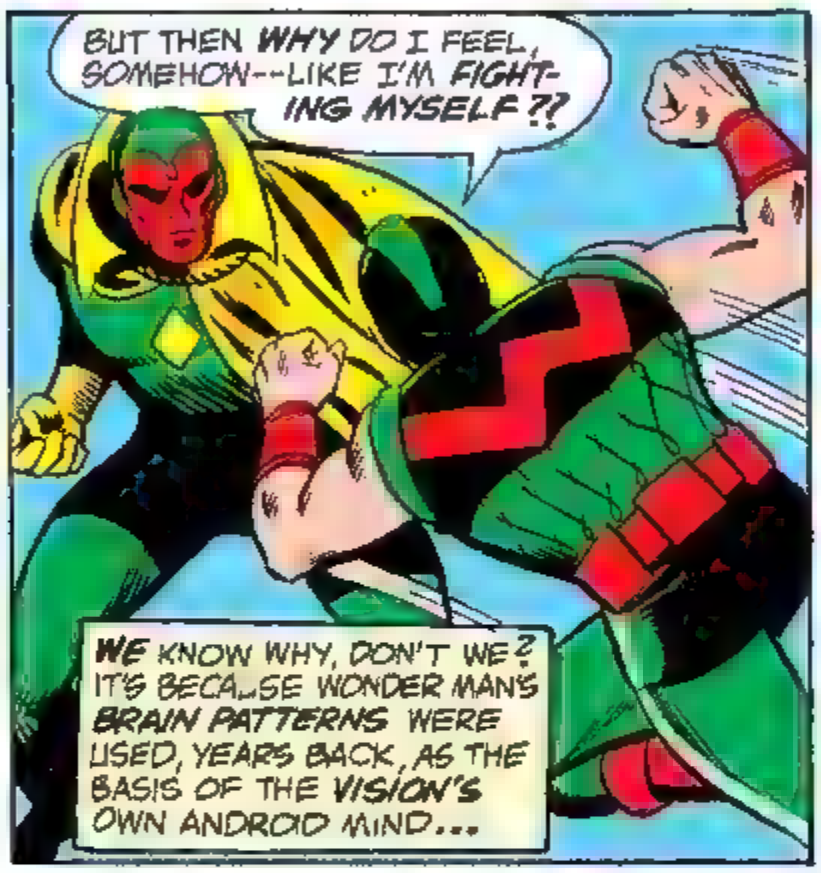
YYYYYYYYYY

OH, BUT I SHALL MAKE YOU WHOLE AGAIN, MY DEAR BARON...

...A WHOLE BLOB OF SHAPELESS, LIFELESS PROTOPLASM!

FROM DUST DID I RAISE HIM--AND TO THE DUST HAS HE RETURNED!
AND NOW, BEFORE IMMORTUS CAN TAKE FURTHER WRATHFUL ACTION--


--LET'S SEE HOW THINGS ARE GOING ELSEWHERE--!
YOU MUST UNDO THE WRONG YOU'VE DONE, KANG--OR ELSE I SHALL--
WONDER MAN! DO YOUR DUTY! SMASH HIM!
I GUESS-- I'VE GOT TO--


BUT THEN WHY DO I FEEL, SOMEHOW--LIKE I'M FIGHTING MYSELF??
WE KNOW WHY, DON'T WE? IT'S BECAUSE WONDER MAN'S BRAIN PATTERNS WERE USED, YEARS BACK, AS THE BASIS OF THE VISION'S OWN ANDROID MIND...

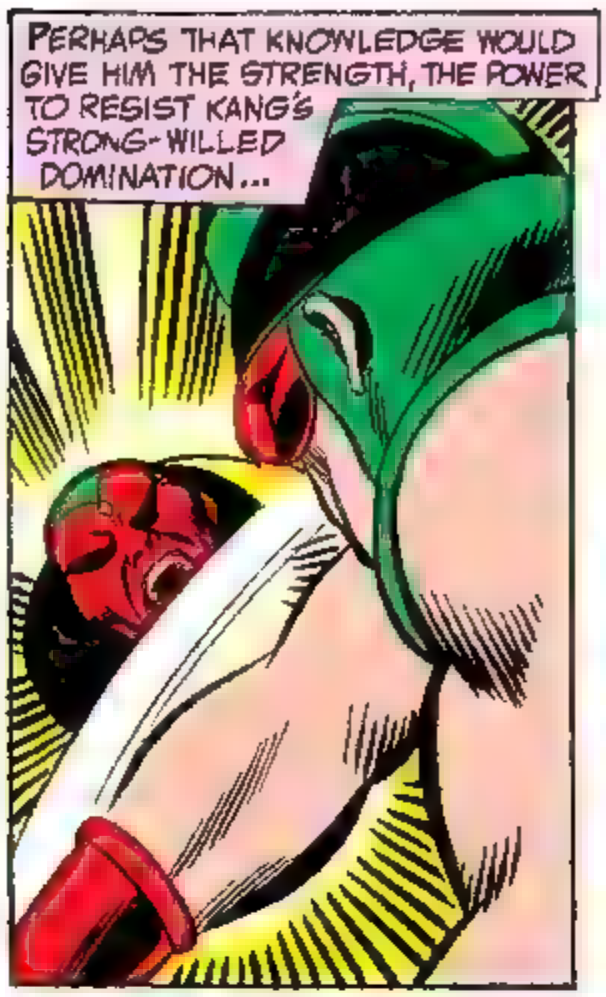
IF SIMON WILLIAMS KNEW THIS-- WHICH HE DEFINITELY DOES NOT, BEING DEAD--
SKA AK
--WOULD HE STILL LASH OUT AT THE VISION...
--WHOSE WOUNDED STATE PREVENTS HIM FROM BECOMING INTANGIBLE?

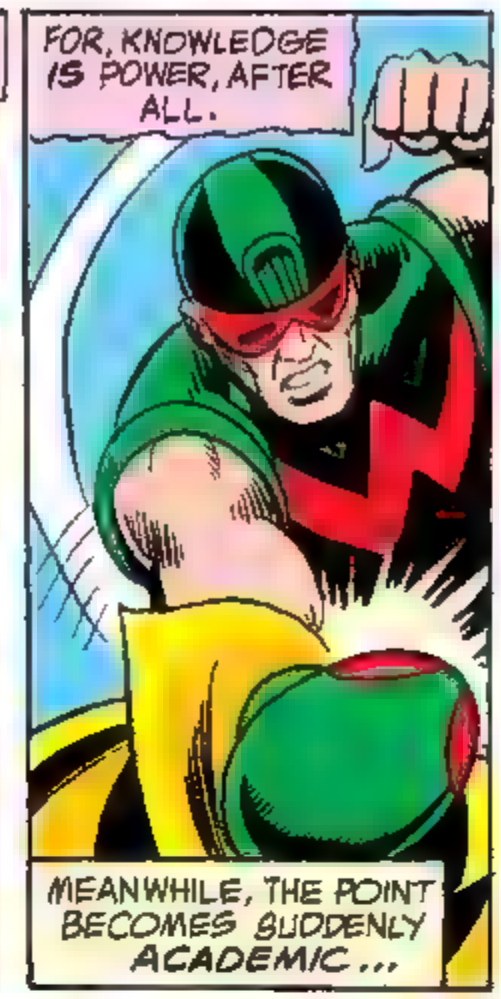
WOULD HE STILL, LIKE KANG'S LIVING WEAPON, ATTACK WITHOUT MERCY...

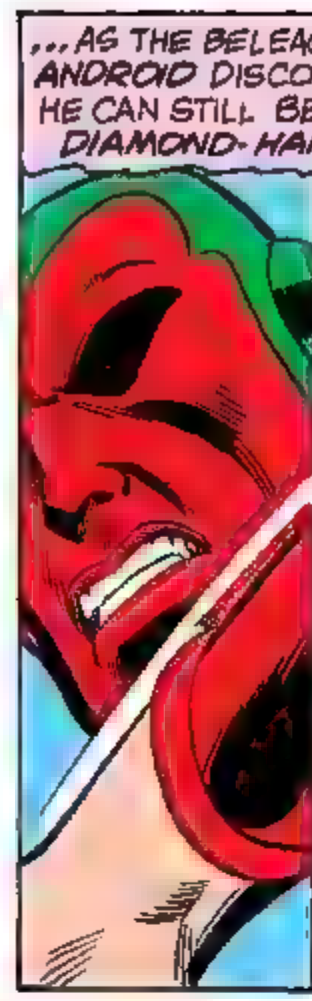
AND, WHEN REBUFFED--
KKK

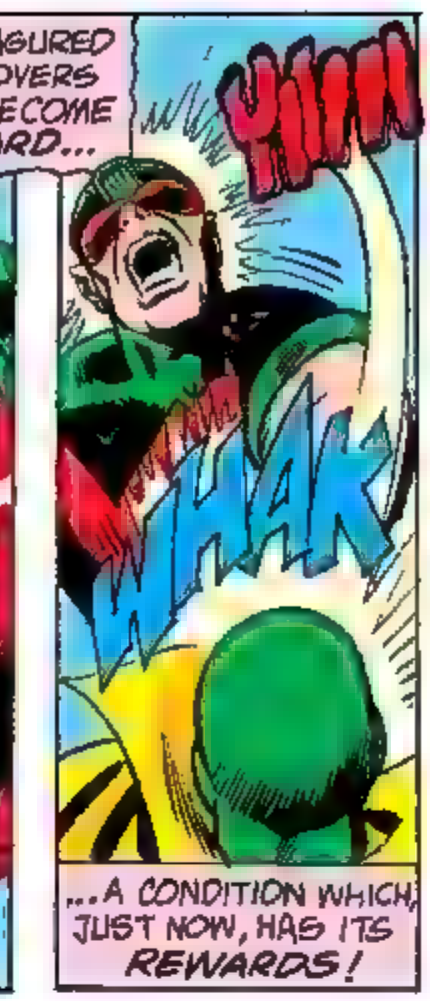
--WOULD HE RISE, WITH A VENGEFUL SNARL--

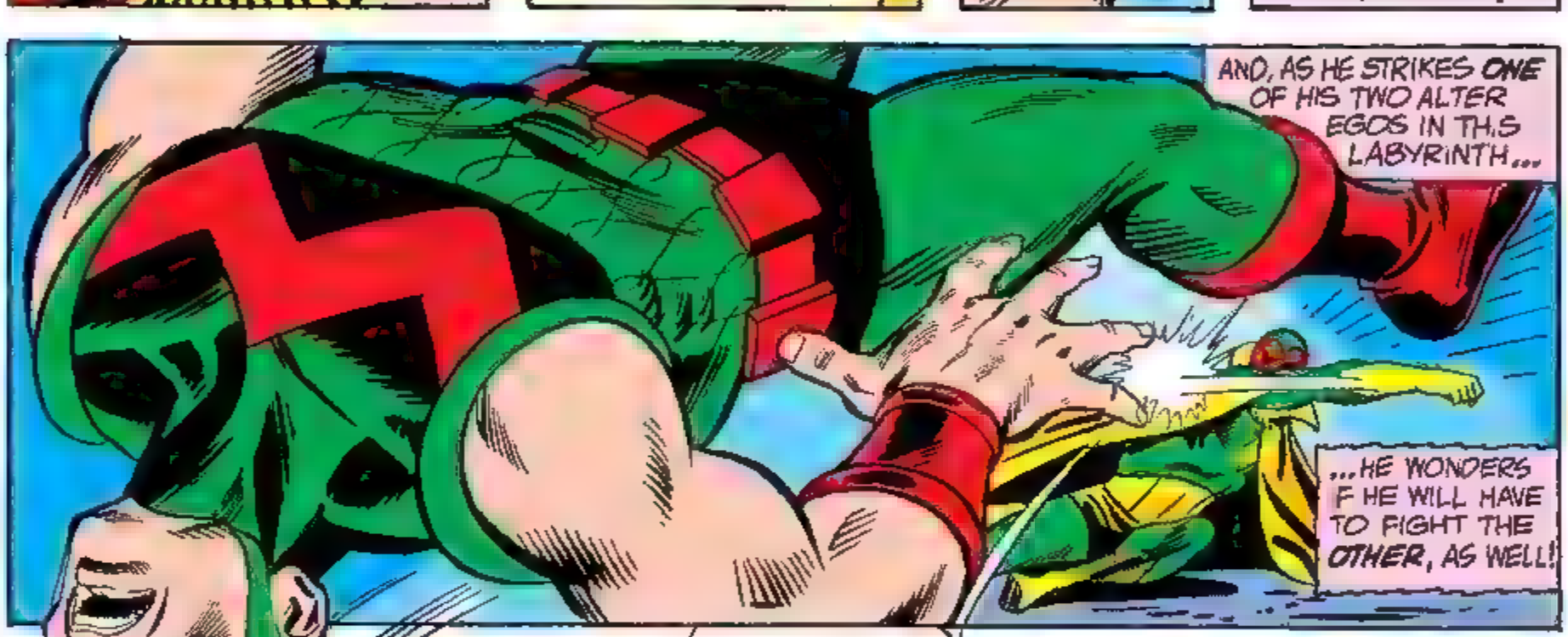
--TO ATTACK ONCE MORE?
PHUT!

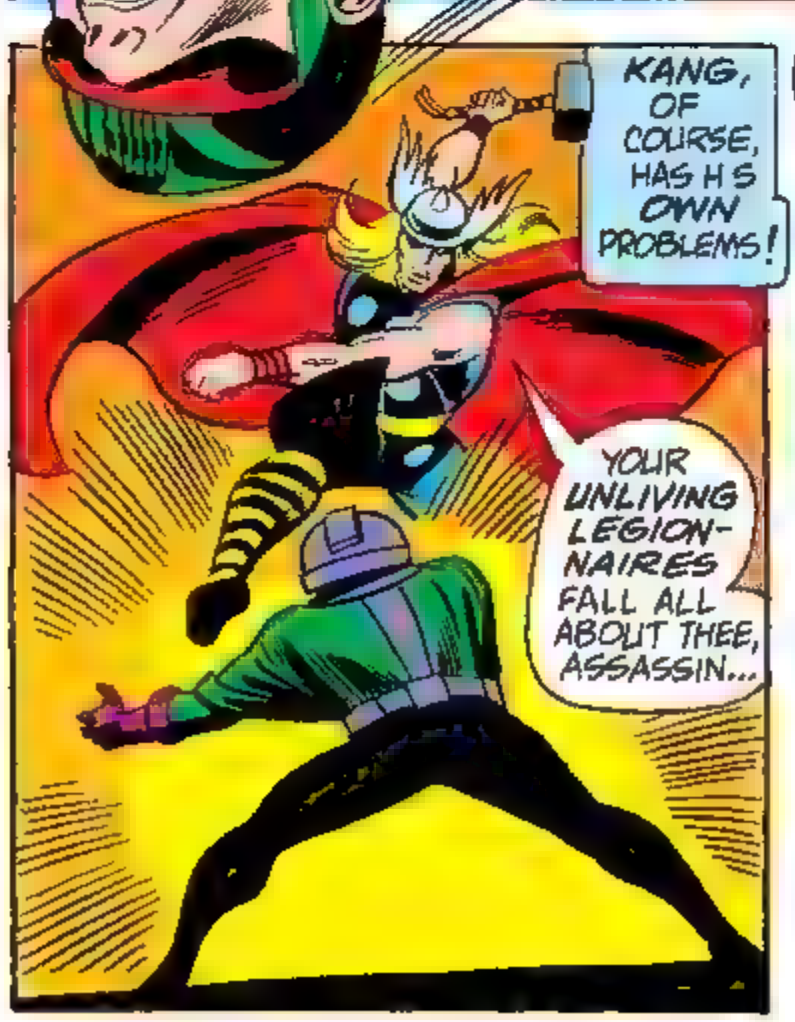

PERHAPS THAT KNOWLEDGE WOULD GIVE HIM THE STRENGTH, THE POWER TO RESIST KANG'S STRONG-WILLED DOMINATION...

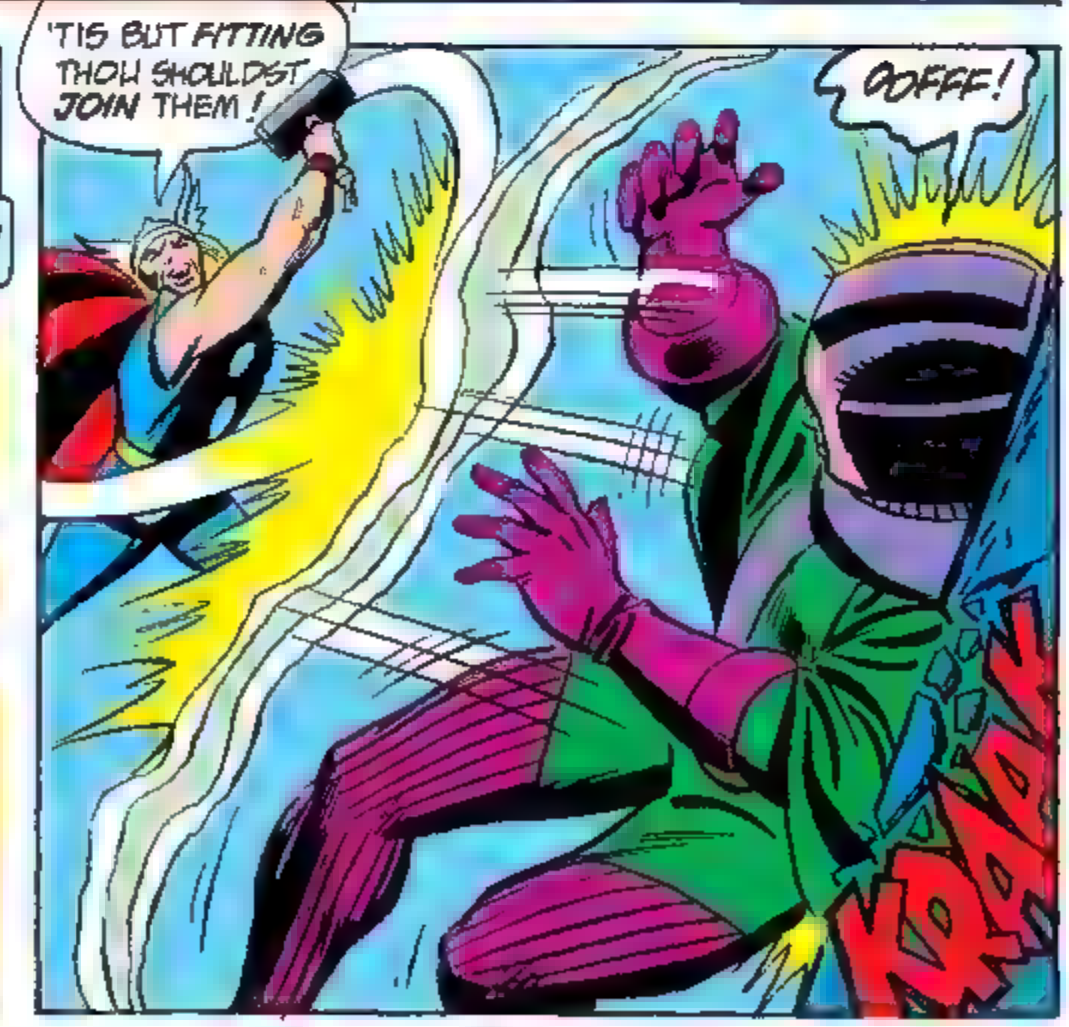

FOR, KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, AFTER ALL.
MEANWHILE, THE POINT BECOMES SUDDENLY ACADEMIC...

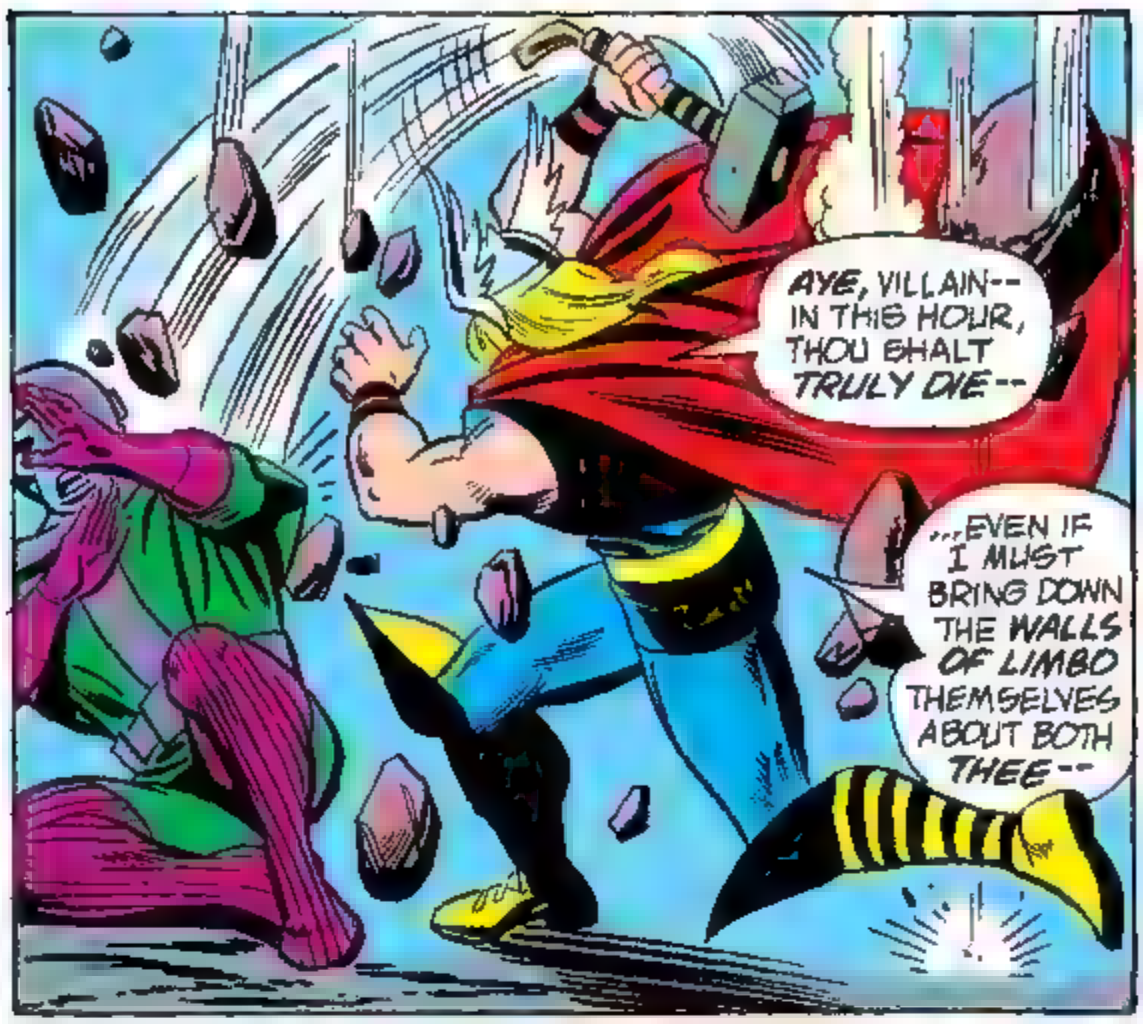

...AS THE BELEAGURED ANDROID DISCOVERS HE CAN STILL BECOME DIAMOND-HARD...

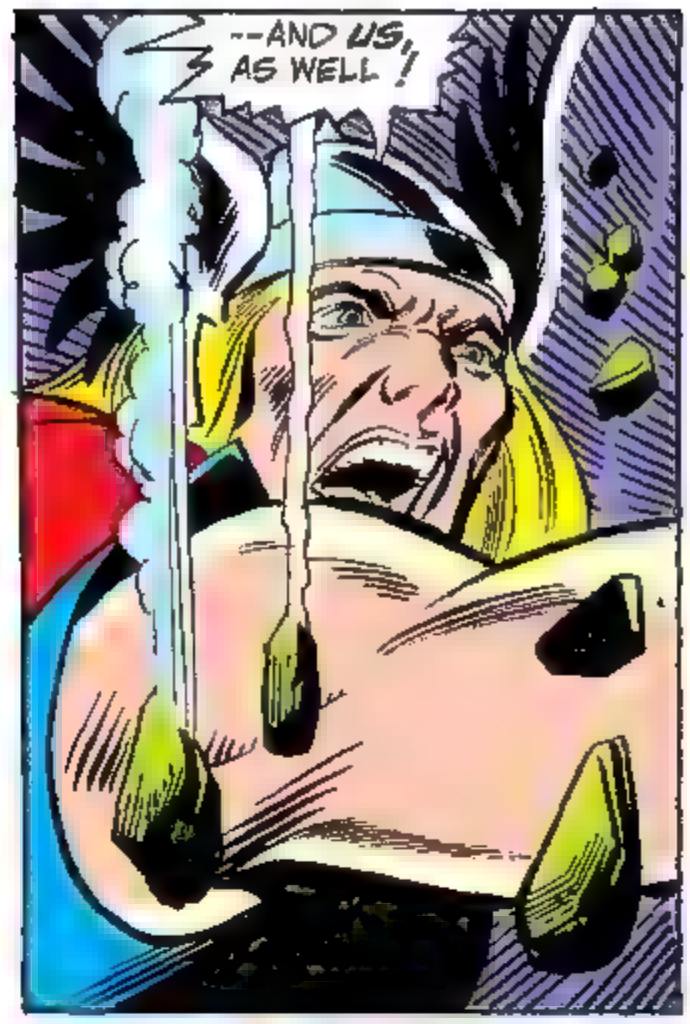

WHAK
...A CONDITION WHICH, JUST NOW, HAS ITS REWARDS!

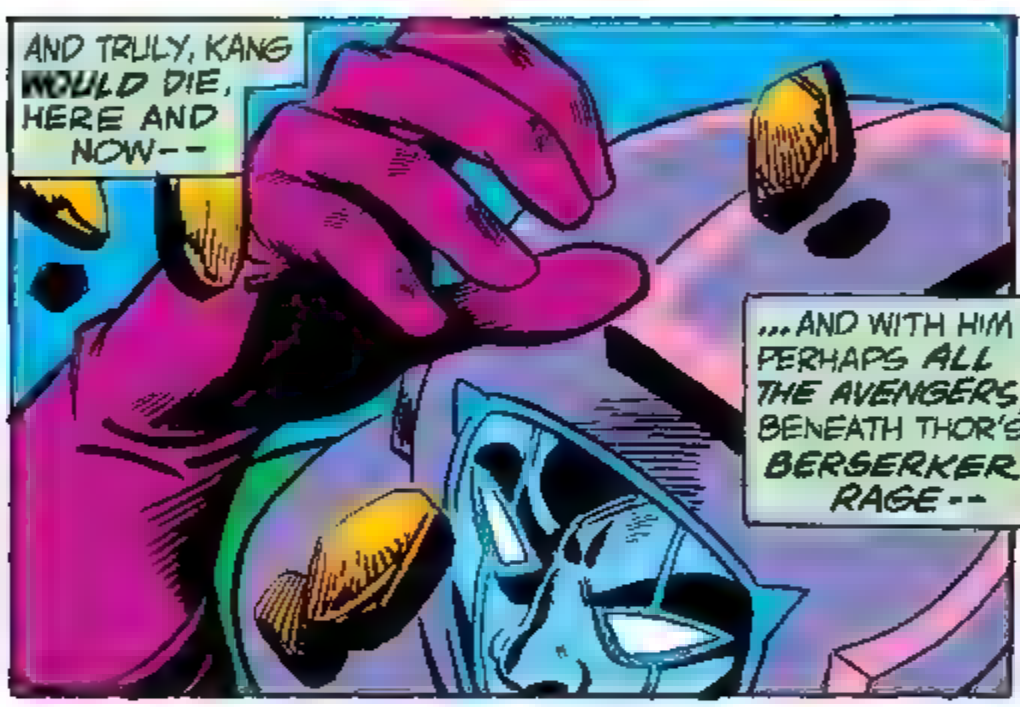

AND, AS HE STRIKES ONE OF HIS TWO ALTER EGOS IN THIS LABYRINTH...
...HE WONDERS IF HE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THE OTHER, AS WELL!

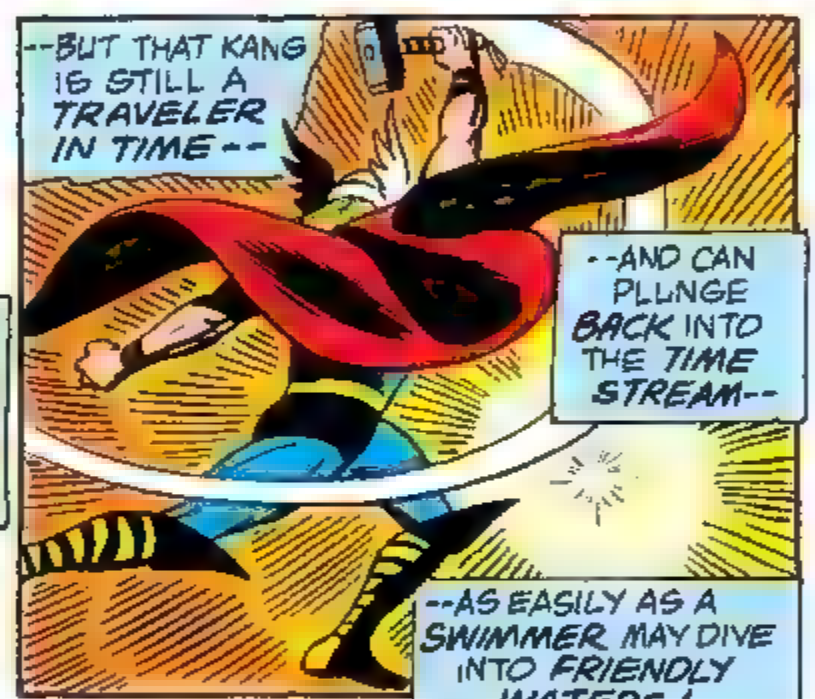

KANG, OF COURSE, HAS HIS OWN PROBLEMS!
YOUR UNLIVING LEGIONNAIRES FALL ALL ABOUT THEE, ASSASSIN...


'TIS BUT FITTING THOU SHOULDST JOIN THEM!
OOFFF!
KRAK


AYE, VILLAIN-- IN THIS HOUR, THOU SHALT TRULY DIE--
...EVEN IF I MUST BRING DOWN THE WALLS OF LIMBO THEMSELVES ABOUT BOTH THEE--


--AND US, AS WELL!

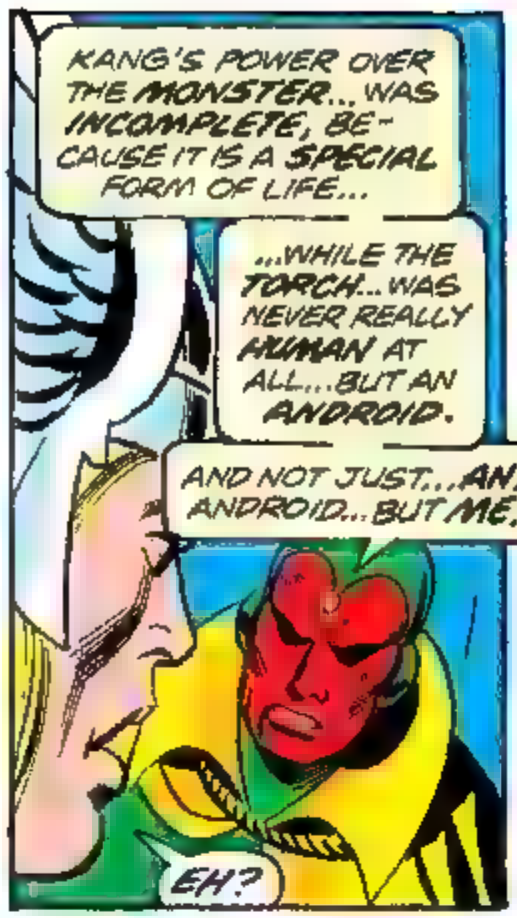

AND TRULY, KANG WOULD DIE, HERE AND NOW--
...AND WITH HIM PERHAPS ALL THE AVENGERS, BENEATH THOR'S BERSERKER RAGE--

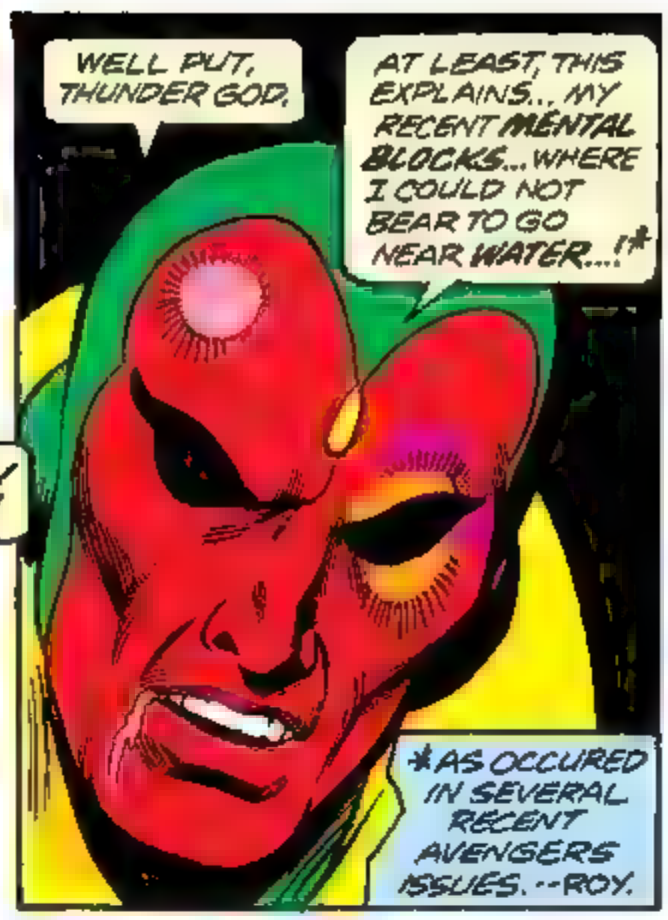

--BUT THAT KANG IS STILL A TRAVELER IN TIME--
--AND CAN PLUNGE BACK INTO THE TIME STREAM--
--AS EASILY AS A SWIMMER MAY DIVE INTO FRIENDLY WATERS!

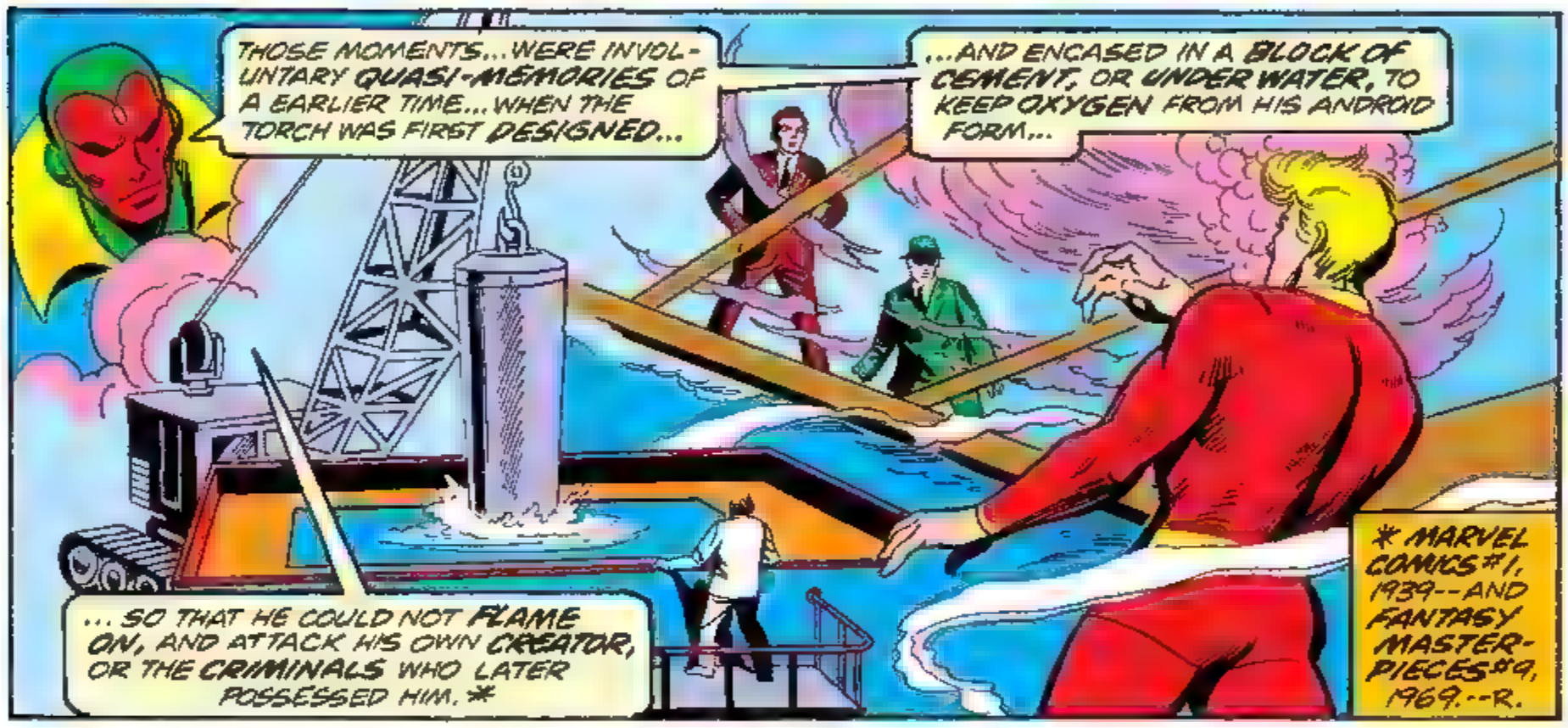
ONLY THEN DOES THE WARRIOR MADNESS LEAVE THE SON OF ODIN...
IS THIS, THEN, HOW IT ALL DOTH END?
THIS IGNOMINIOUS PUFF OF SMOKE-- AND KANG ESCAPES?
WE'LL SETTLE FOR THAT, THUNDER GOD...

...SINCE WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO TAKE CARE OF--LIKE HELPING THE VISION HERE!
I KNOW THEE NOT, LITTLE MAN--
BUT--THAT TOWERING GARGOYLE BEHIND THEE BOTH--!
SLOW DOWN... A MINUTE... ASGARDIAN...!

IF NOT... FOR THAT "TOWERING GARGOYLE"... THERE WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH TO ME LEFT... FOR THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH, HERE... TO CARRY...!
BUT, HOW DID THESE TWO DARE OPPOSE KANG, WHO CONTROLLED THEIR EERIE HALF-LIVES?

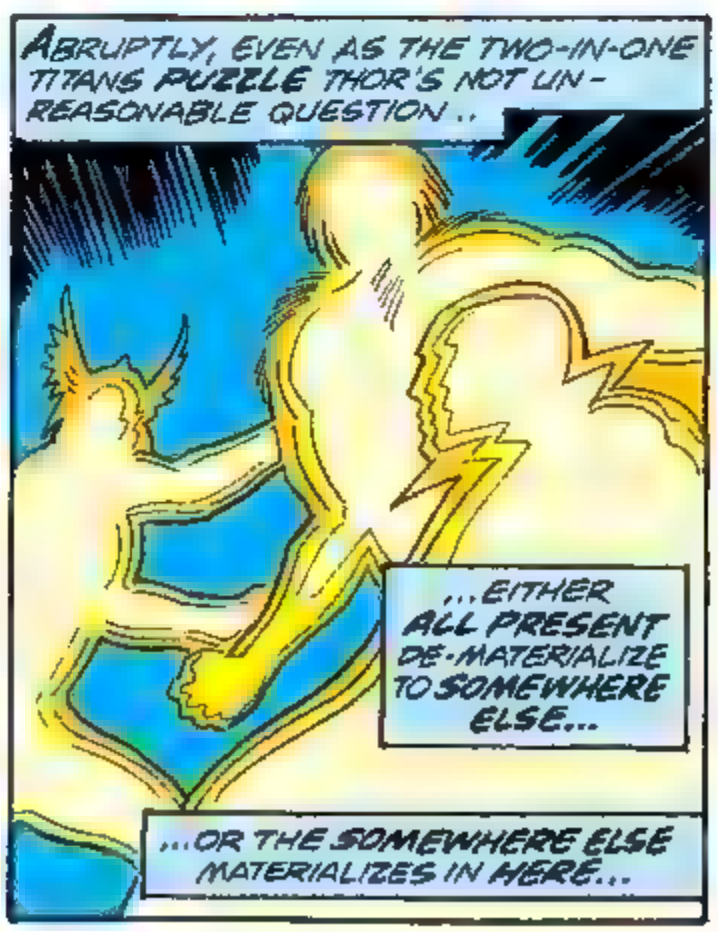

KANG'S POWER OVER THE MONSTER... WAS INCOMPLETE, BECAUSE IT IS A SPECIAL FORM OF LIFE...
...WHILE THE TORCH... WAS NEVER REALLY HUMAN AT ALL... BUT AN ANDROID.
AND NOT JUST... ANY ANDROID... BUT ME!
EH?

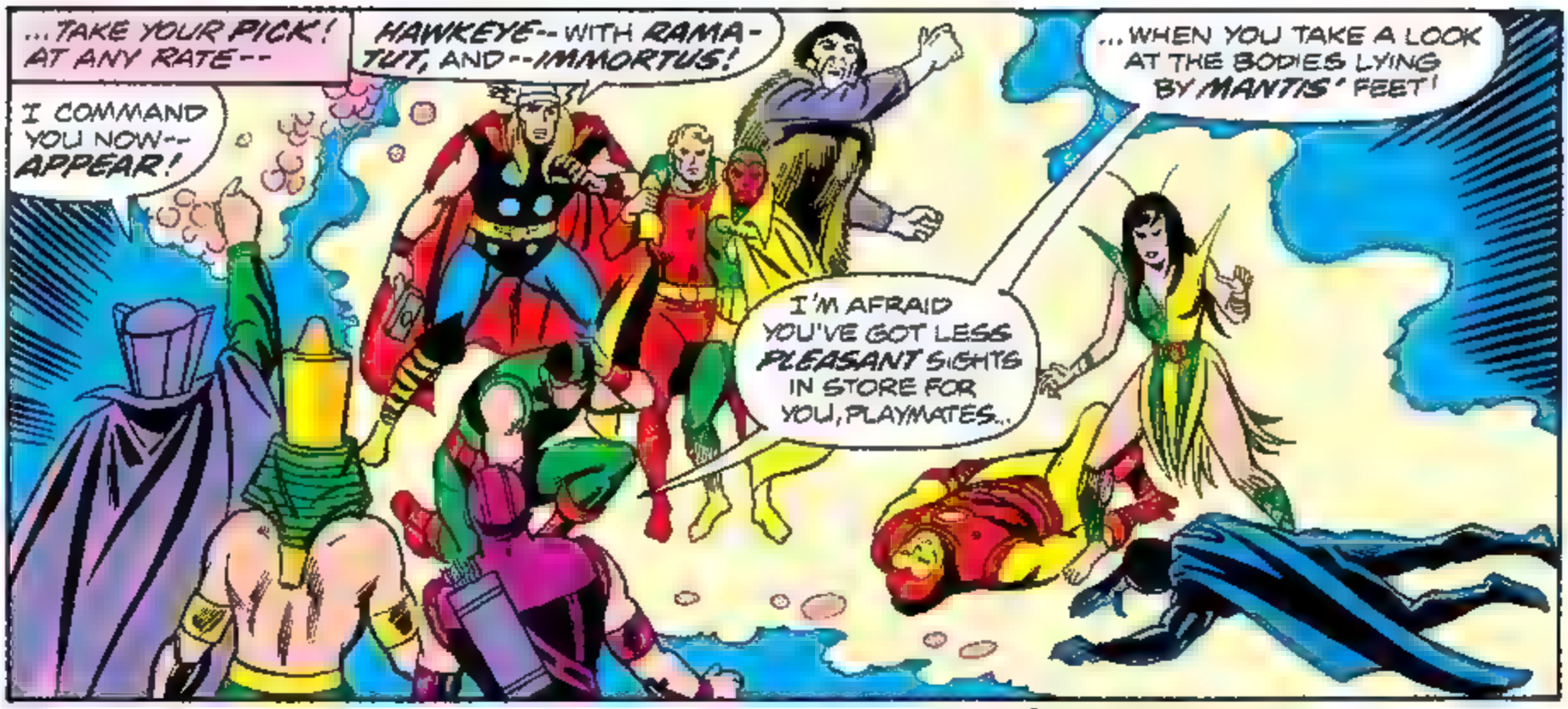

WELL PUT, THUNDER GOD.
AT LEAST, THIS EXPLAINS... MY RECENT MENTAL BLOCKS... WHERE I COULD NOT BEAR TO GO NEAR WATER...!*
*AS OCCURED IN SEVERAL RECENT AVENGERS ISSUES. --ROY.


THOSE MOMENTS... WERE INVOLUNTARY QUASI-MEMORIES OF A EARLIER TIME... WHEN THE TORCH WAS FIRST DESIGNED...
...AND ENCASED IN A BLOCK OF CEMENT, OR UNDER WATER, TO KEEP OXYGEN FROM HIS ANDROID FORM...
... SO THAT HE COULD NOT FLAME ON, AND ATTACK HIS OWN CREATOR, OR THE CRIMINALS WHO LATER POSSESSED HIM.*
* MARVEL COMICS #1, 1939--AND FANTASY MASTERPIECES #9, 1969.--R.

THE TORCH... WAS THE FIRST ANDROID, AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR ONCE TOLD US.
AND EVENTUALLY, HE BECAME-- THE VISION.
THEN, I MUST ASK THEE BOTH-- HOW??

?
?

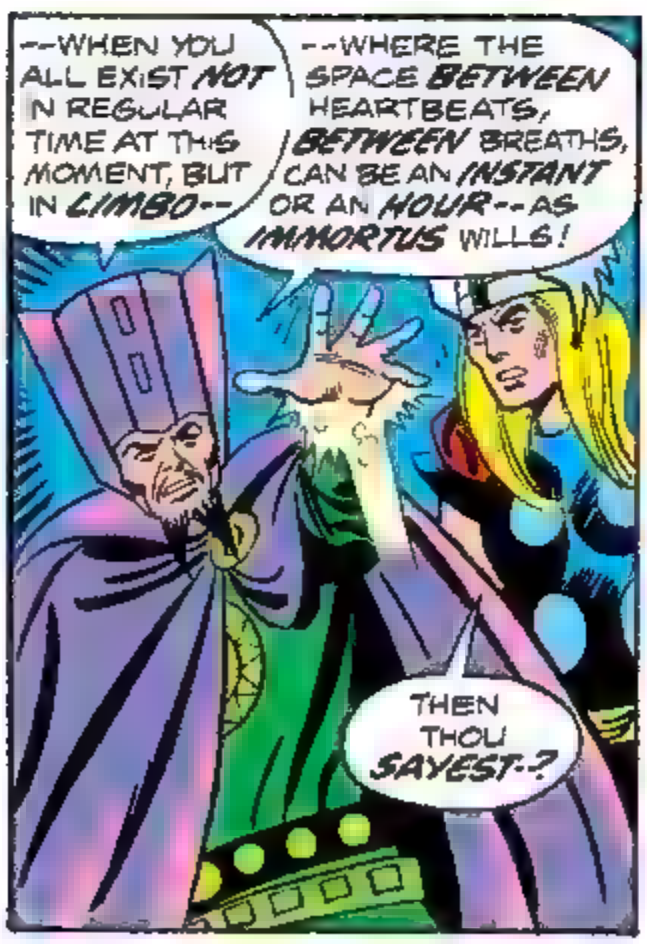

ABRUPTLY, EVEN AS THE TWO-IN-ONE TITANS PUZZLE THOR'S NOT UNREASONABLE QUESTION..
...EITHER ALL PRESENT DE-MATERIALIZE TO SOMEWHERE ELSE...
...OR THE SOMEWHERE ELSE MATERIALIZES IN HERE...


...TAKE YOUR PICK! AT ANY RATE--
HAWKEYE--WITH RAMA-TUT, AND--IMMORTUS!
I COMMAND YOU NOW--APPEAR!
...WHEN YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THE BODIES LYING BY MANTIS' FEET!
I'M AFRAID YOU'VE GOT LESS PLEASANT SIGHTS IN STORE FOR YOU, PLAYMATES...

I DON'T KNOW THE BLACK-CLAD ONE--BUT HE STILL BREATHES.
WHILE IRON MAN--DOES NOT!

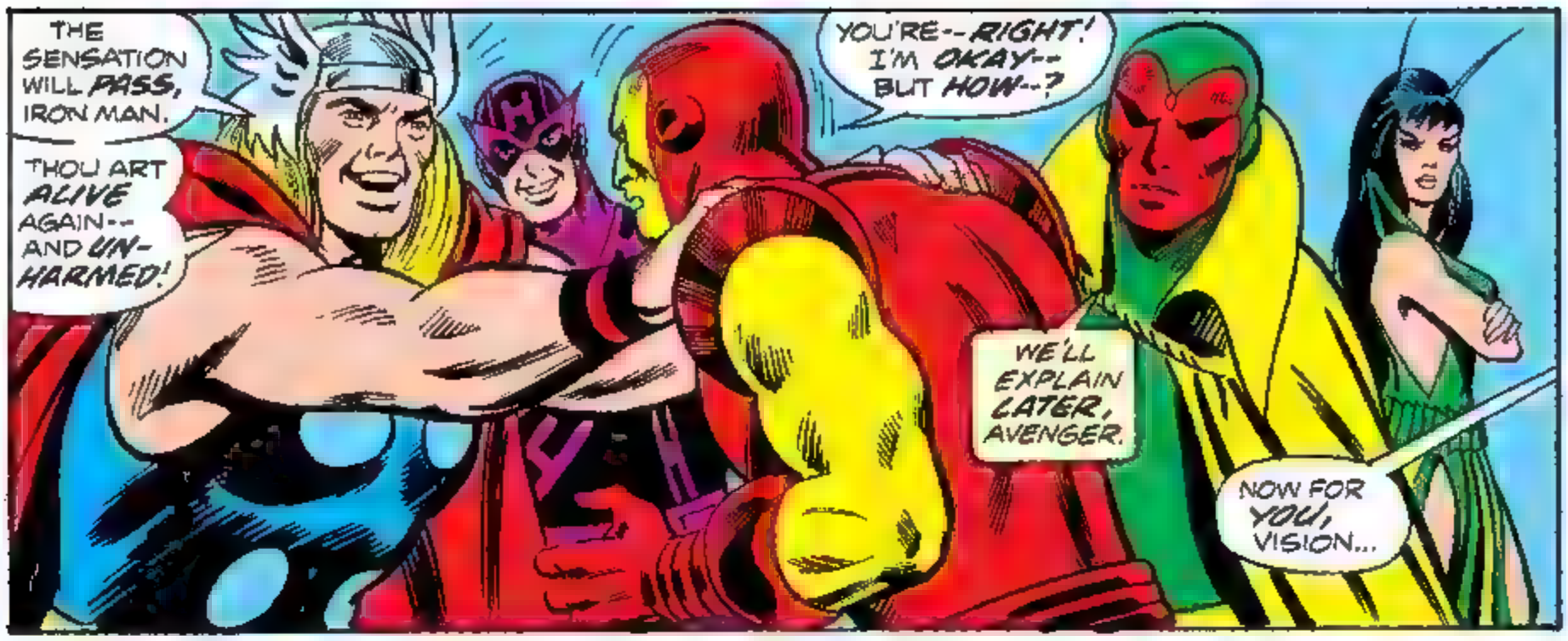
ALL MEN DIE IN THEIR TIME.
MANTIS DID ...WHAT SHE COULD.
MANTIS--WHAT HAPPENED? YOU SEEM--SO UNCONCERNED ABOUT IT ALL--!

THAT'S NOT THE POINT, WOMAN
I DARED HOPE--BUT NO! IRON MAN IS TRULY DEAD. THERE'S NO BREATH--NO HEARTBEAT--!
AND WHY SHOULD THERE BE, ANDROID--


--WHEN YOU ALL EXIST NOT IN REGULAR TIME AT THIS MOMENT, BUT IN LIMBO--
--WHERE THE SPACE BETWEEN HEARTBEATS, BETWEEN BREATHS, CAN BE AN INSTANT OR AN HOUR--AS IMMORTUS WILLS!
THEN THOU SAYEST--?

--THAT THE GOLDEN AVENGER LIVES, THOR!

WHAT IS MORE, ONLY A SECOND HAS PASSED FOR HIM SINCE HE WAS FELLED.
THE HEAT--THAT INHUMAN HEAT--! I--I CAN'T--


THE SENSATION WILL PASS, IRON MAN.
THOU ART ALIVE AGAIN-- AND UN-HARMED!
YOU'RE--RIGHT! I'M OKAY-- BUT HOW--?
WE'LL EXPLAIN LATER, AVENGER.
NOW FOR YOU, VISION...

YOU ENTERED THE LABYRINTH OF LIMBO A PERSON ENTIRE --AND SO SHALL YOU SOON DEPART!
MY ARM--MY HAND-- RESTORED AGAIN, AS IF BY MAGIC--!
NO, NOT MAGIC-- SIMPLY LAWS OF SCIENCE WHICH NONE WHO DWELL ON AN EARTHLY PLANE CAN EVER HOPE TO UNDER-STAND--NOT EVEN YOU!

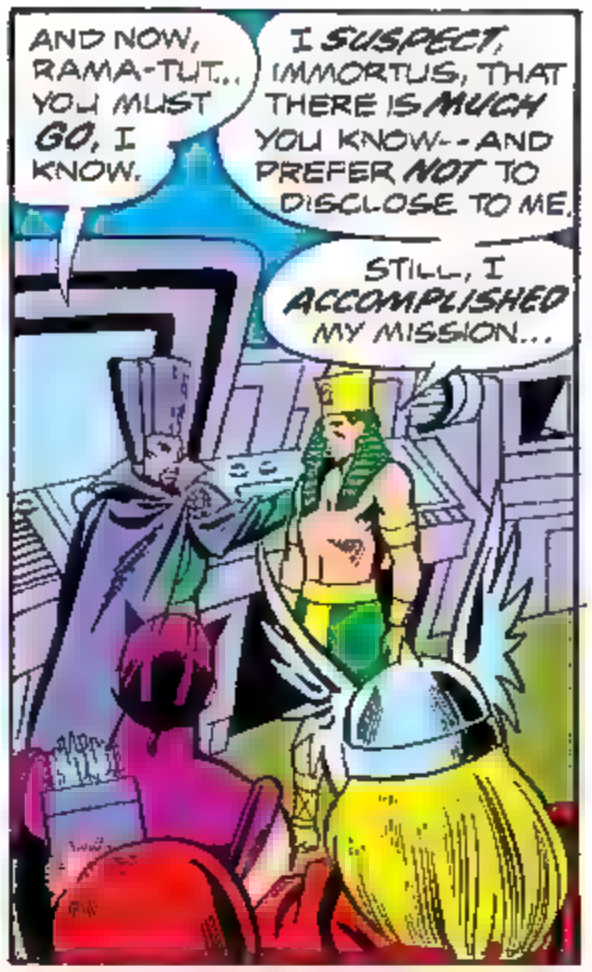
EVEN YOUR MURDERER SHALL BE BROUGHT BACK--THOUGH WITHOUT THE POWER OF FREE WILL.
ONLY THUS MAY I SEND HIM BACK INTO THE TIME STREAM, THERE TO MEET--WITH THE OTHERS--HIS RIGHTFUL DESTINY.

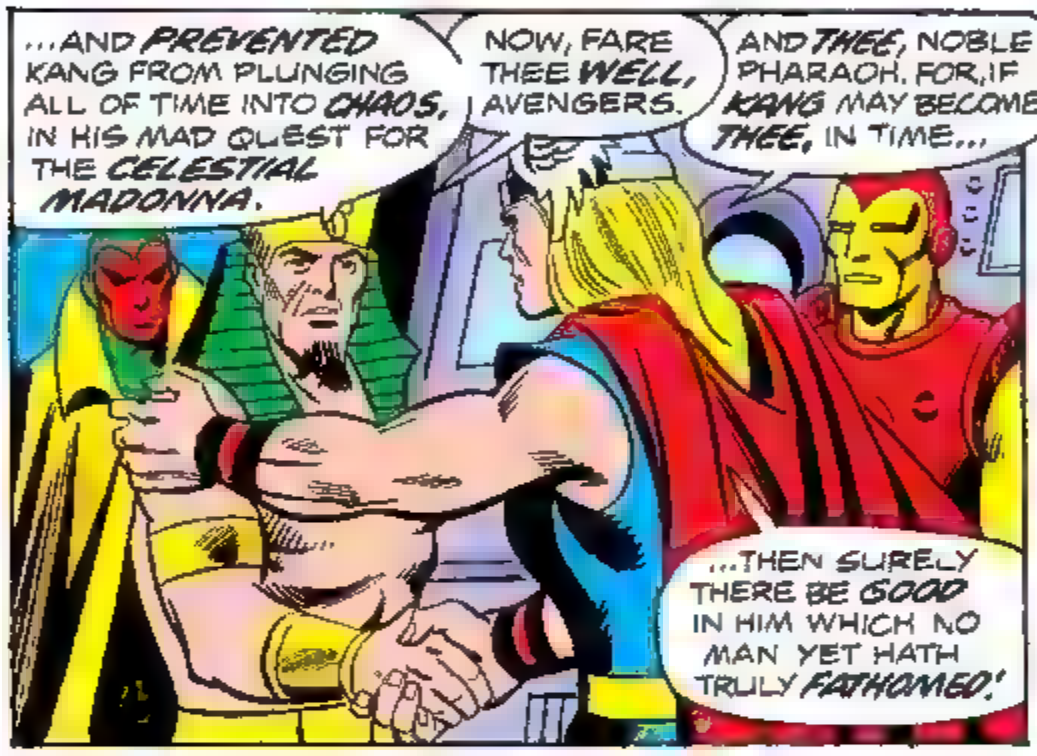
NOW--HAVE I FORGOTTEN ANYONE?
IF NOT--
YOU SURE DID, BIG MAN..

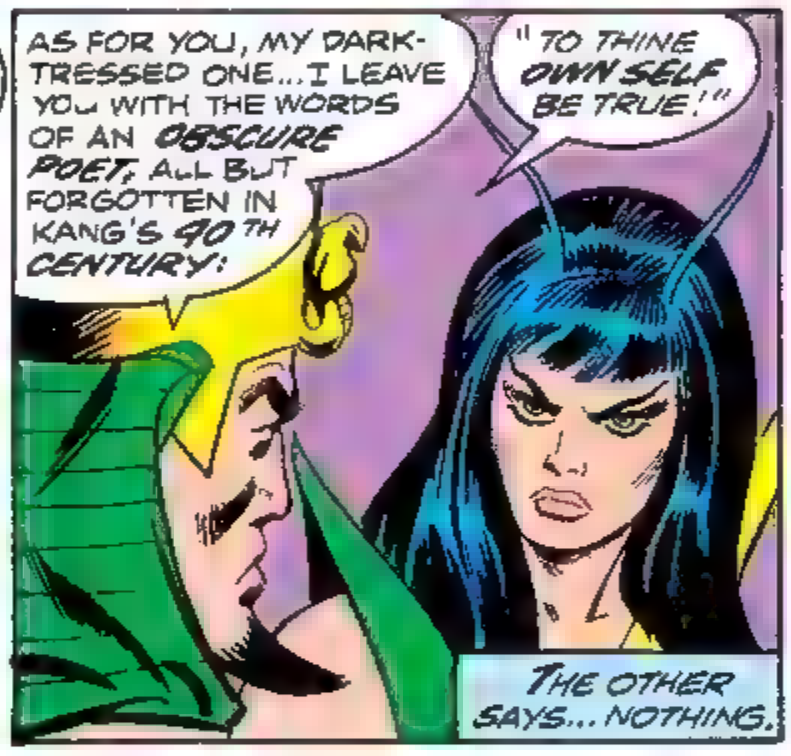
YOU FORGOT ZEMO!
THAT LEFTOVER SIEG-HEILER MIGHT'A BEEN A CRUMB--
BUT, NO MAN DESERVES-- THAT!
BESIDES, I'LL SLEEP BETTER IF I KNOW HE'S IN A GRAVE SOMEWHERE, 'STEAD'A FLOPPIN' AROUND LIKE THAT!

THE GOOD BARON WAS A PARTICULARLY DISTRESSING INDIVIDUAL .. SO ORDINARILY, I WOULD DENY YOUR REQUEST.
BUT, UPON SECOND THOUGHT...

...IT PLEASES ME TO THINK OF HIS GOING THRU ETERNITY WEARING THE MASK HE SO DESPISES!
AND SO-- YES! IT IS JUSTICE INDEED

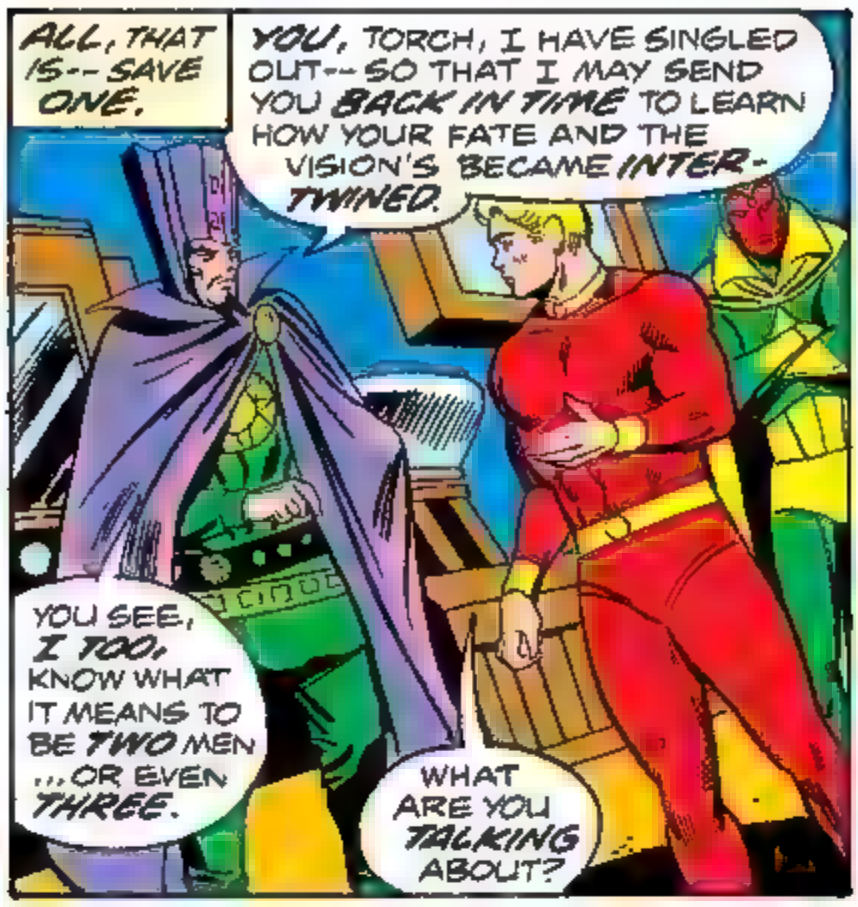

AND NOW, RAMA-TUT... YOU MUST GO, I KNOW.
I SUSPECT, IMMORTUS, THAT THERE IS MUCH YOU KNOW--AND PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE TO ME.
STILL, I ACCOMPLISHED MY MISSION...


...AND PREVENTED KANG FROM PLUNGING ALL OF TIME INTO CHAOS, IN HIS MAD QUEST FOR THE CELESTIAL MADONNA.
NOW, FARE THEE WELL, AVENGERS.
AND THEE, NOBLE PHARAOH. FOR, IF KANG MAY BECOME THEE, IN TIME...
...THEN SURELY THERE BE GOOD IN HIM WHICH NO MAN YET HATH TRULY FATHOMED!


AS FOR YOU, MY DARK-TRESSED ONE... I LEAVE YOU WITH THE WORDS OF AN OBSCURE POET, ALL BUT FORGOTTEN IN KANG'S 40TH CENTURY:
"TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE!"
THE OTHER SAYS... NOTHING.

THEN, RAMA-TUT VANISHES WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD...

...EVEN AS ALL THE UNLIVING LEGION DO LIKEWISE, EACH TO HIS OWN SPECIAL FATE, BE IT DEATH...
...OR THE MOMENT IN TIME WHEN HE WAS SNATCHED LIVING FROM OUT OF THE TIME STREAM...
...TO PLAY A ROLE IN A DRAMA WHICH NO ONE IN ANY CENTURY WILL EVER FULLY COMPREHEND.


ALL, THAT IS-- SAVE ONE.
YOU, TORCH, I HAVE SINGLED OUT-- SO THAT I MAY SEND YOU BACK IN TIME TO LEARN HOW YOUR FATE AND THE VISION'S BECAME INTER-TWINED.
YOU SEE, I TOO, KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TWO MEN ...OR EVEN THREE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

HAVE YOU NOT GUESSED-- AS RAMA-TUT DID-- AS I AM SURE SEVERAL OF THE AVENGERS HAVE?
IMMORTUS HIMSELF IS BUT ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF BOTH KANG-- AND OF RAMA-TUT--
--HERE, IN A NAMELESS LIMBO AND FUTURE OF WHICH EVEN RAMA-TUT WAS UNAWARE!
THIS IS ALL BEYOND ME!

AS WELL IT SHOULD BE!
THERE ARE THINGS WHICH NEITHER YOU NOR RAMA-TUT MAY KNOW. . UNTIL THE APPOINTED TIME.
SO IT IS WRITTEN --IN THE FUTURE HISTORY OF THE CELESTIAL MADONNA.

A MOMENT MORE, AND WE SHALL STAND ON EARTH ONCE MORE-- AND VERILY, EVEN I HAVE COME TO MISS IT.
YET--YOU STILL HAVE NOT ANSWERED MY QUESTION.
HOW DID THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH COME TO BE--THE VISION?
I...DON'T KNOW, THOR...

BUT, WITH THE AID OF THE ONE CALLED IMMORTUS, WE ARE BOTH DETERMINED TO FIND THE ANSWER...
AND NEITHER OF US WOULD BET A ROOSEVELT NICKEL THAT WE'RE GOING TO LIKE IT!
THE QUEST GOES ON--IN AVENGERS #133!

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
133
MAR
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
BY THE BEARD OF ODIN--IT CANNOT BE!
OF ALL PEOPLE-- WE WOULD NEVER HAVE SUSPECTED YOU!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE — TO LEARN THE STARTLING
SECRET OF THE HOODED ONE!

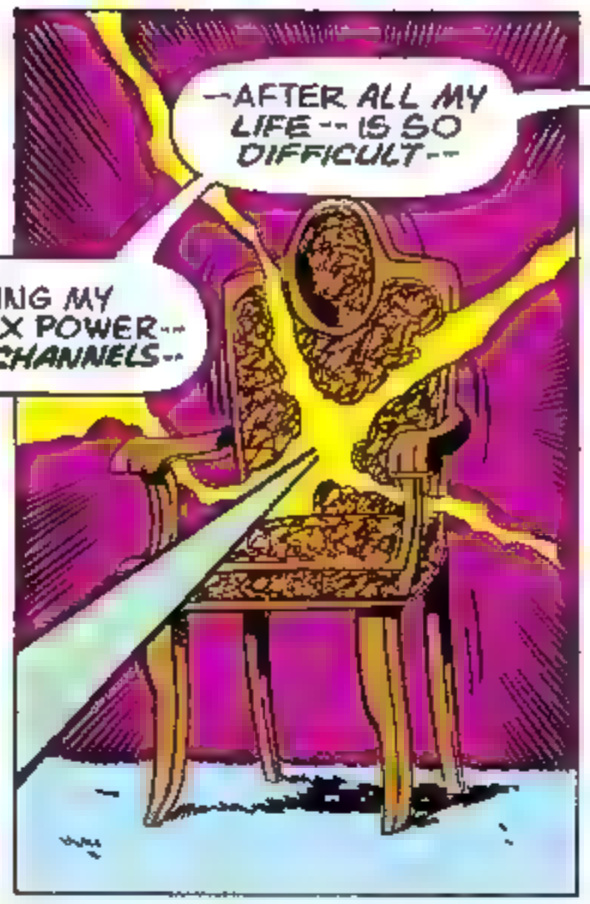
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!**®

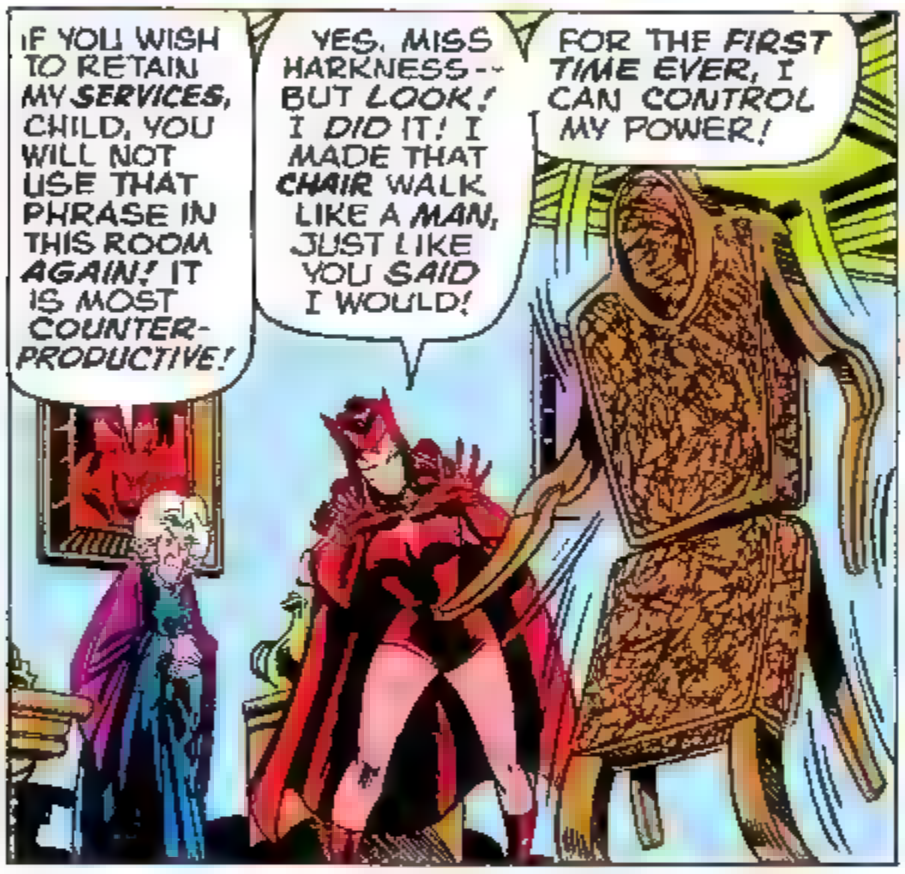
YESTERDAY AND BEYOND...

STEVE ENGLEHART Author	SAL BUSCEMA & JOE STATON Artists	TOM ORZECHOWSKI, Calligraphy PHIL RACHELSON, Coloring	LEN WEIN Editor

WE'VE SPENT DAYS LOCKED UP IN THIS ROOM WHILE YOU TRIED TO TEACH ME TRUE WITCHCRAFT! I WON'T FAIL YOU--
--BUT--
--FUNNELING MY MUTANT HEX POWER-- INTO NEW CHANNELS--

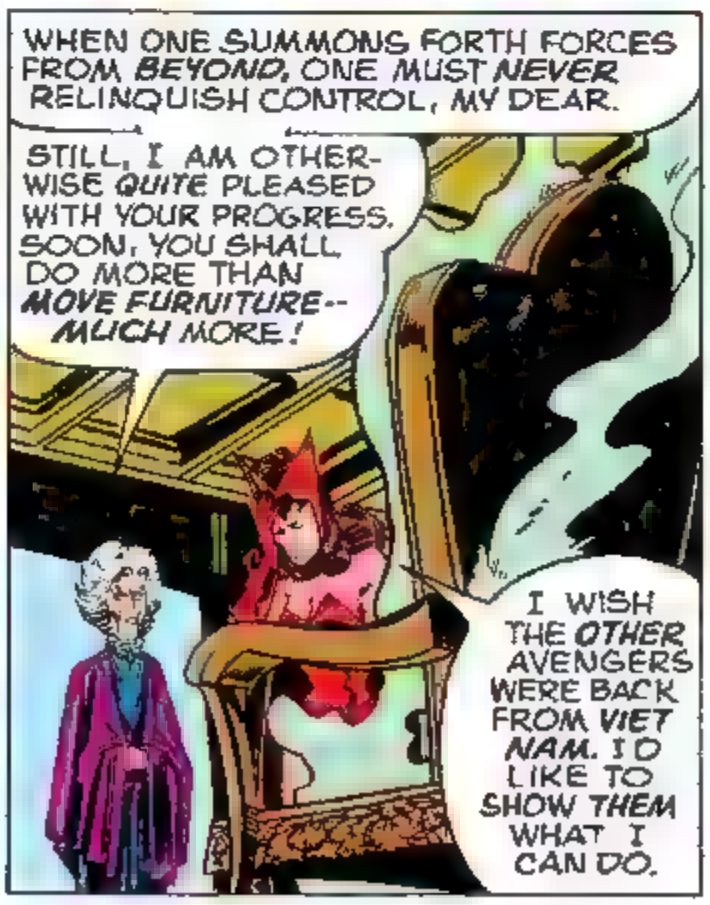

--AFTER ALL MY LIFE -- IS SO DIFFICULT--

GOOD LORD!

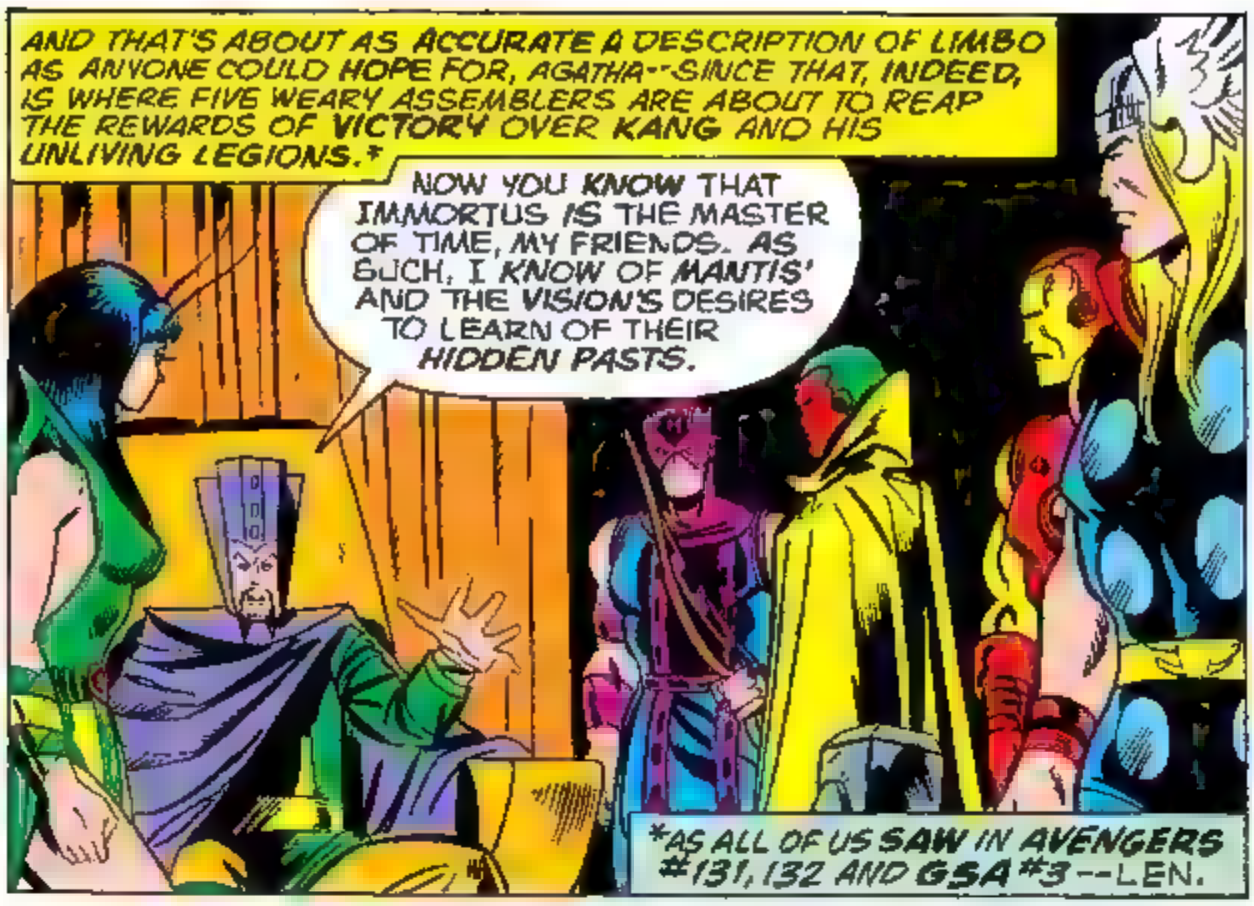

IF YOU WISH TO RETAIN MY SERVICES, CHILD, YOU WILL NOT USE THAT PHRASE IN THIS ROOM AGAIN! IT IS MOST COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE!
YES, MISS HARKNESS -- BUT LOOK! I DID IT! I MADE THAT CHAIR WALK LIKE A MAN, JUST LIKE YOU SAID I WOULD!
FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, I CAN CONTROL MY POWER!

ONLY-- IT STILL TAKES SO MUCH OUT OF ME! LETTING MY HEX FLOW, INSTEAD OF BURSTING FORTH, WEAKENS ME EVEN MORE IN THE END!
MORE THAN YOU KNOW, WANDA-- FOR AS YOU RELAX YOUR VIGILANCE--
I HAVE SO MUCH MORE TO LEARN.
--YOUR CREATURE TURNS UPON YOU!

FORTUNATELY, MY SKILLS ARE FINELY HONED-- AND, DUE TO MY SENSIBLE PRECAUTION OF SEALING US AWAY FROM THE DISTRACTING WORLD--
--ALWAYS AT YOUR SIDE TO PROTECT YOU!

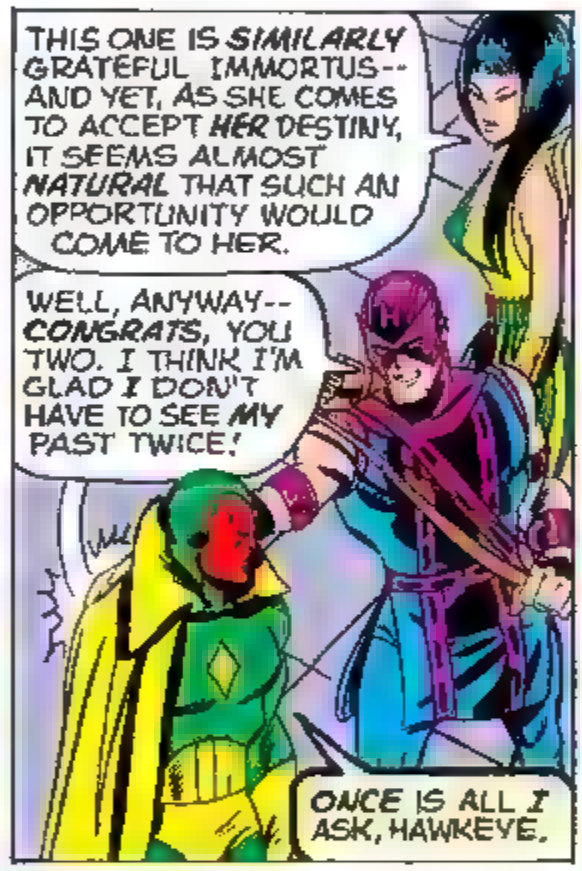

WHEN ONE SUMMONS FORTH FORCES FROM BEYOND, ONE MUST NEVER RELINQUISH CONTROL, MY DEAR.
STILL, I AM OTHER-WISE QUITE PLEASED WITH YOUR PROGRESS. SOON, YOU SHALL DO MORE THAN MOVE FURNITURE-- MUCH MORE!
I WISH THE OTHER AVENGERS WERE BACK FROM VIET NAM. I'D LIKE TO SHOW THEM WHAT I CAN DO.

THE AVENGERS ARE NO LONGER IN VIET NAM, WANDA.
IN FACT, MY DEAR, THEY ARE NO LONGER EVEN ON THIS EARTH!


AND THAT'S ABOUT AS ACCURATE A DESCRIPTION OF LIMBO AS ANYONE COULD HOPE FOR, AGATHA--SINCE THAT, INDEED, IS WHERE FIVE WEARY ASSEMBLERS ARE ABOUT TO REAP THE REWARDS OF VICTORY OVER KANG AND HIS UNLIVING LEGIONS.*
NOW YOU KNOW THAT IMMORTUS IS THE MASTER OF TIME, MY FRIENDS. AS SUCH, I KNOW OF MANTIS' AND THE VISION'S DESIRES TO LEARN OF THEIR HIDDEN PASTS.
*AS ALL OF US SAW IN AVENGERS #131, 132 AND GSA #3--LEN.

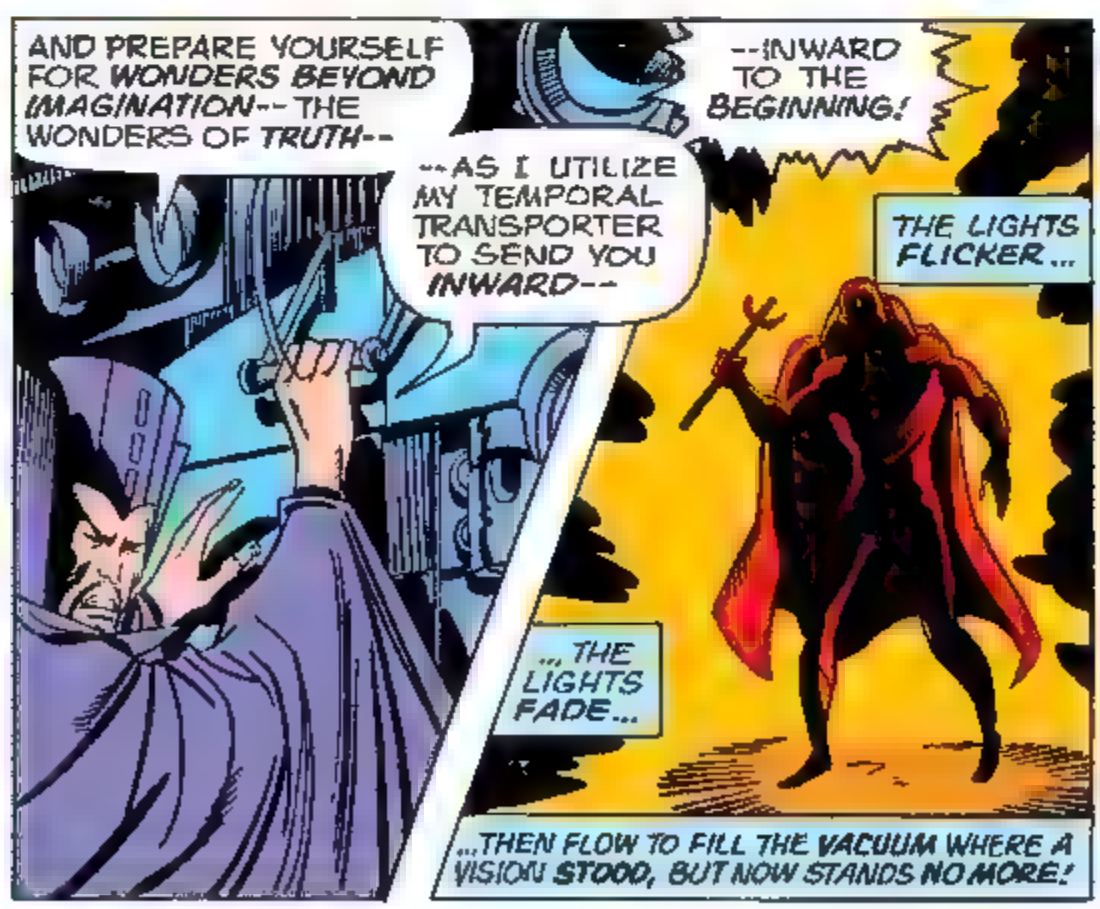
THEREFORE, SINCE I USED YOU SO SHAMELESSLY IN MY SCHEME TO TEACH KANG THE DOMINANCE OF DESTINY--
--I HEREBY OFFER YOU, AS RECOMPENSE, THE CHANCE TO OBSERVE THOSE PASTS!
DOES THAT SUFFICE?

SUFFICE? YOU MEAN--JUST LIKE THAT, I CAN LEARN THE ANSWERS I'VE SOUGHT ALL MY KNOWN LIFE?
SUFFICE??!
I SEE THAT IT DOES.

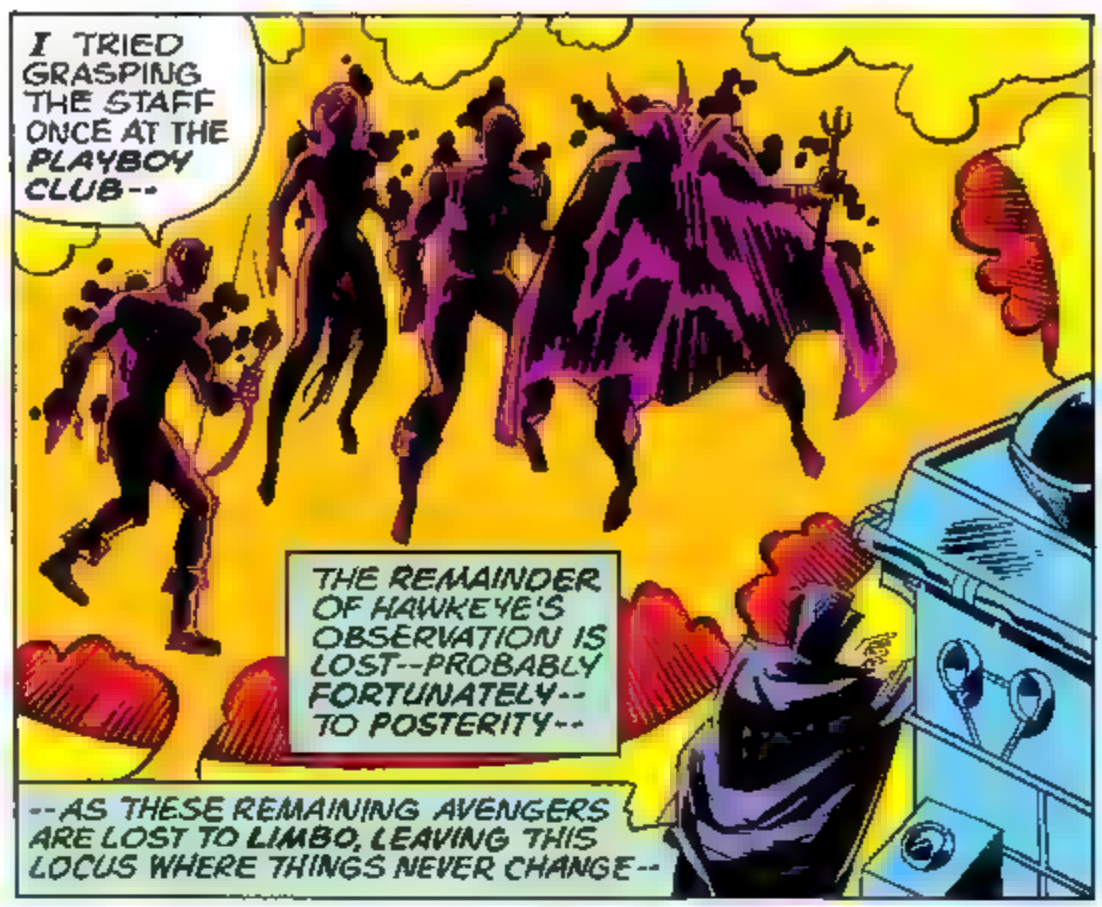

THIS ONE IS SIMILARLY GRATEFUL IMMORTUS--AND YET, AS SHE COMES TO ACCEPT HER DESTINY, IT SEEMS ALMOST NATURAL THAT SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY WOULD COME TO HER.
WELL, ANYWAY--CONGRATS, YOU TWO. I THINK I'M GLAD I DON'T HAVE TO SEE MY PAST TWICE!
ONCE IS ALL I ASK, HAWKEYE.

MY SOLE REGRET IS THAT I CANNOT JOIN YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY, MANTIS.
OUR PASTS ARE SEPARATE--SO MUST BE OUR PATHS TO THEM.
BUT WE SHALL MEET AGAIN, FOR THE FUTURE IS...
...THE CULMINATION OF OUR PASTS.

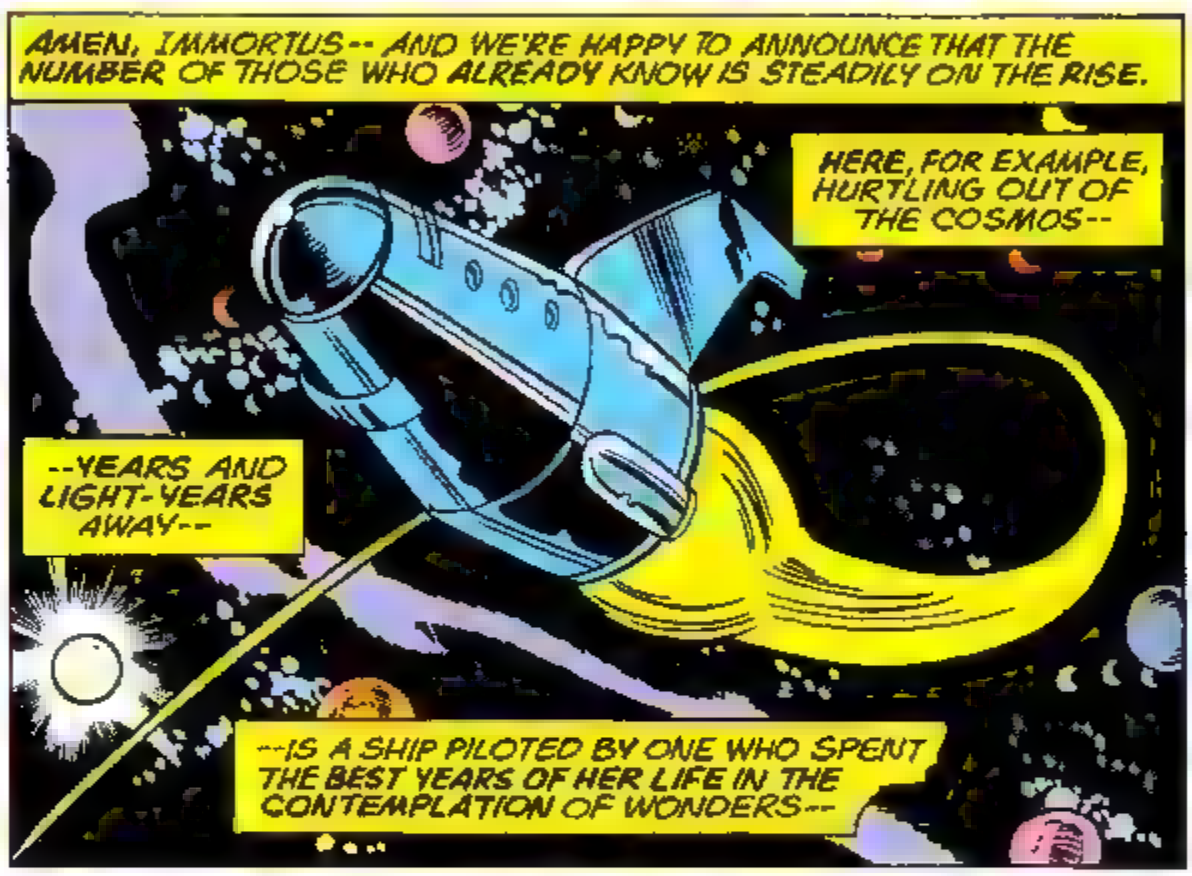
SHE IS CORRECT, VISION. YOU MUST TRAVEL THROUGH TIME NOT ONLY SEPARATE, BUT ALONE--
--FOR YOUR SECRETS ARE TOO RECENT, TOO ABLE TO AFFECT THE PRESENT, TO BE KNOWN TO ANY BUT YOURSELF.
TAKE THIS SYNCHRO-STAFF. IT WILL GUIDE YOU.

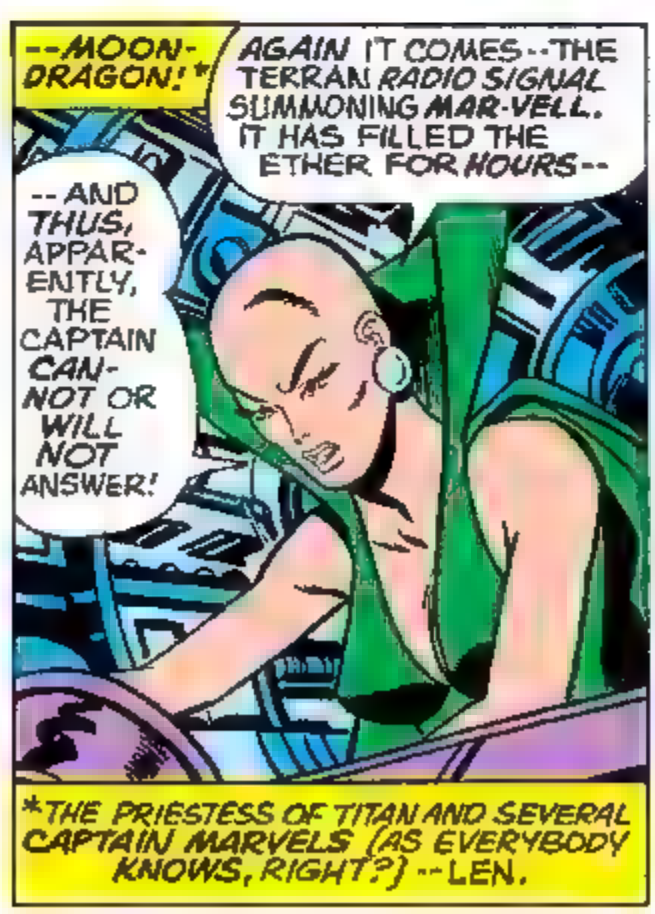

AND PREPARE YOURSELF FOR WONDERS BEYOND IMAGINATION--THE WONDERS OF TRUTH--
--AS I UTILIZE MY TEMPORAL TRANSPORTER TO SEND YOU INWARD--
--INWARD TO THE BEGINNING!
THE LIGHTS FLICKER...
...THE LIGHTS FADE...
...THEN FLOW TO FILL THE VACUUM WHERE A VISION STOOD, BUT NOW STANDS NO MORE!

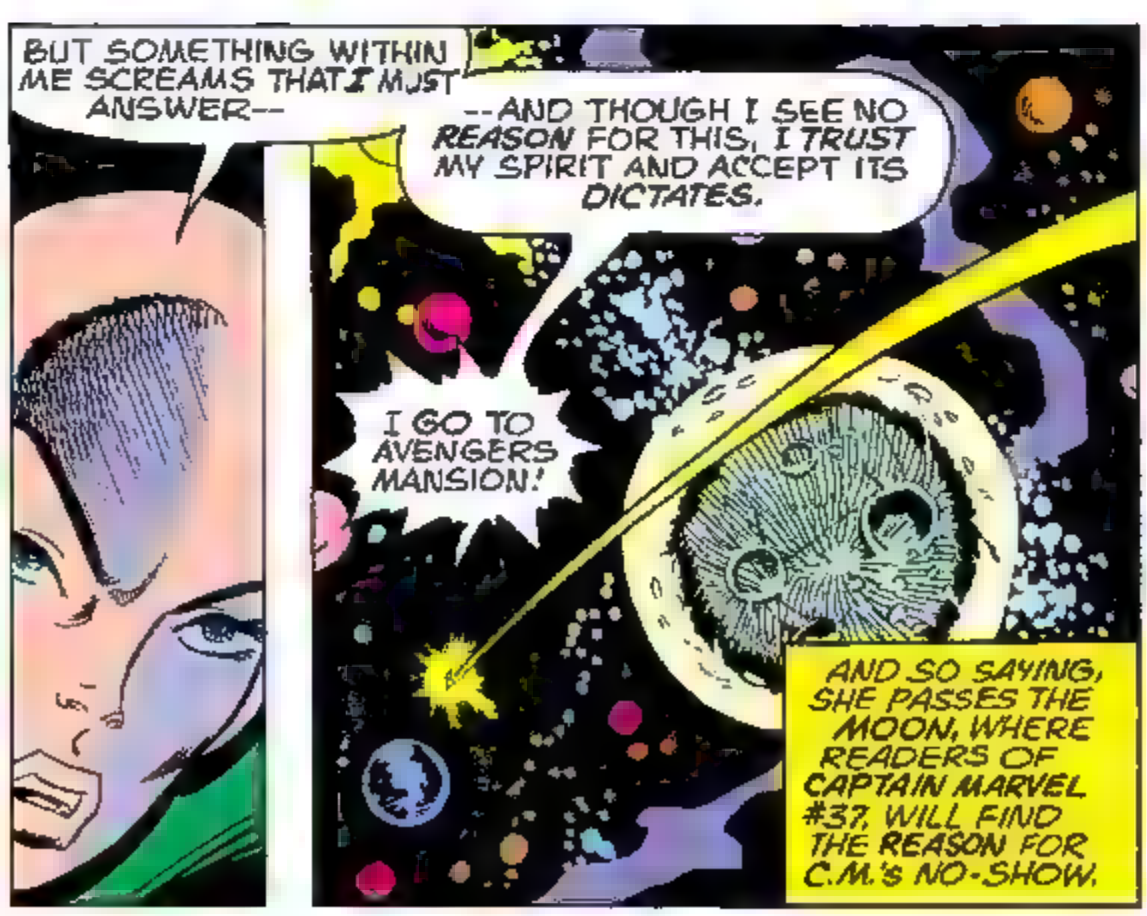
THE REST OF YOU MAY ACCOMPANY YOUR FEMALE FRIEND, FOR HER STORY HAS ITS ROOTS IN A TIME MILLENIA PAST.
HOW CAN THAT BE, IMMORTUS? WHEN---
IT IS TO BE SEEN, NOT SAID, THOR. GRASP THE STAFF AND ALL SHALL BECOME CLEAR.


I TRIED GRASPING THE STAFF ONCE AT THE PLAYBOY CLUB--
THE REMAINDER OF HAWKEYE'S OBSERVATION IS LOST--PROBABLY FORTUNATELY-- TO POSTERITY--
--AS THESE REMAINING AVENGERS ARE LOST TO LIMBO, LEAVING THIS LOCUS WHERE THINGS NEVER CHANGE--

--AND A MAN WHO HAS CHANGED QUITE A LOT.
FIVE LIVES HAVE I KNOWN, AND THE VISION TWO. SOON NOW, MANTIS WILL BEGIN AGAIN AS WELL.
OH, THAT ALL MIGHT KNOW WHAT WONDERS THERE ARE TO THIS FIRMAMENT!


AMEN, IMMORTUS-- AND WE'RE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO ALREADY KNOW IS STEADILY ON THE RISE.
HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, HURTLING OUT OF THE COSMOS--
--YEARS AND LIGHT-YEARS AWAY--
--IS A SHIP PILOTED BY ONE WHO SPENT THE BEST YEARS OF HER LIFE IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF WONDERS--


--MOON-DRAGON!*
AGAIN IT COMES--THE TERRAN RADIO SIGNAL SUMMONING MAR-VELL. IT HAS FILLED THE ETHER FOR HOURS--
--AND THUS, APPARENTLY, THE CAPTAIN CAN-NOT OR WILL NOT ANSWER!
*THE PRIESTESS OF TITAN AND SEVERAL CAPTAIN MARVELS (AS EVERYBODY KNOWS, RIGHT?) --LEN.

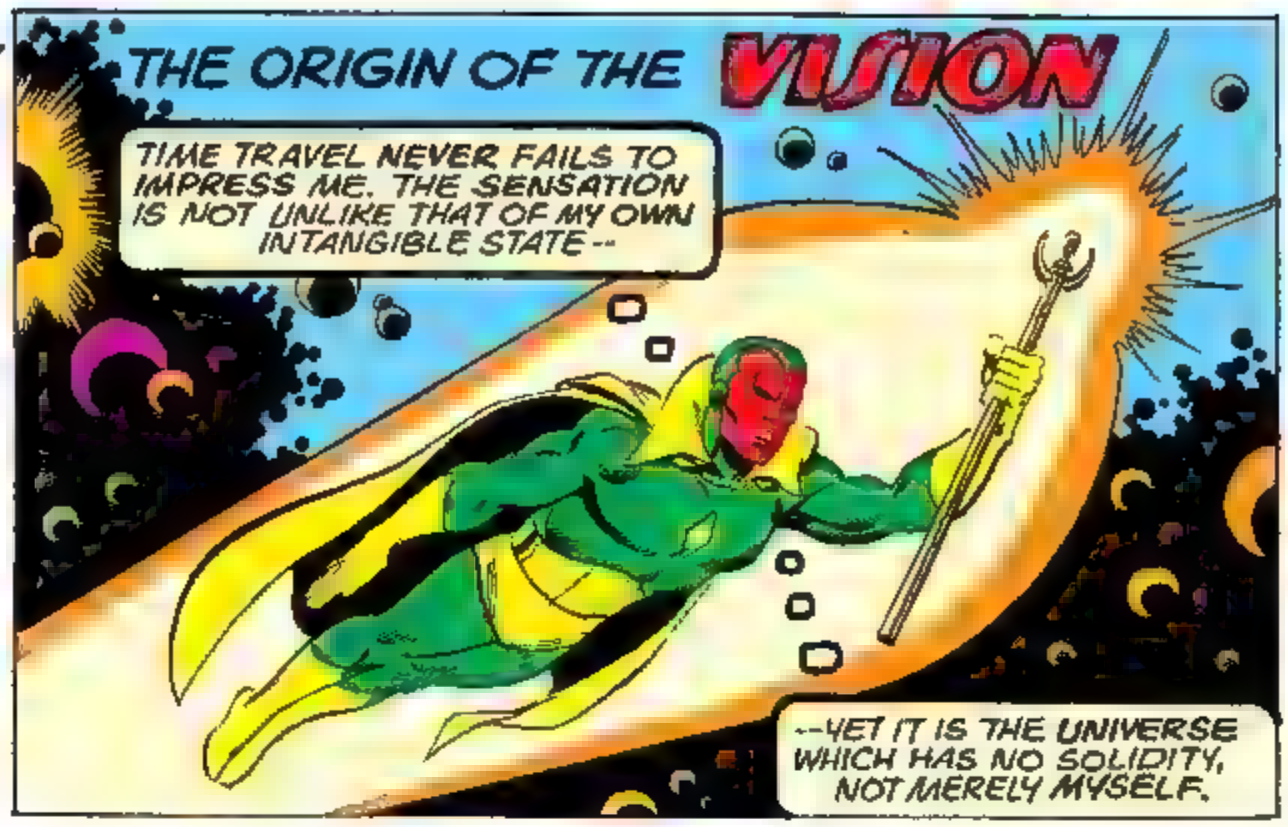

BUT SOMETHING WITHIN ME SCREAMS THAT I MUST ANSWER--
--AND THOUGH I SEE NO REASON FOR THIS, I TRUST MY SPIRIT AND ACCEPT ITS DICTATES.
I GO TO AVENGERS MANSION!
AND SO SAYING, SHE PASSES THE MOON, WHERE READERS OF CAPTAIN MARVEL #37, WILL FIND THE REASON FOR C.M.'S NO-SHOW.

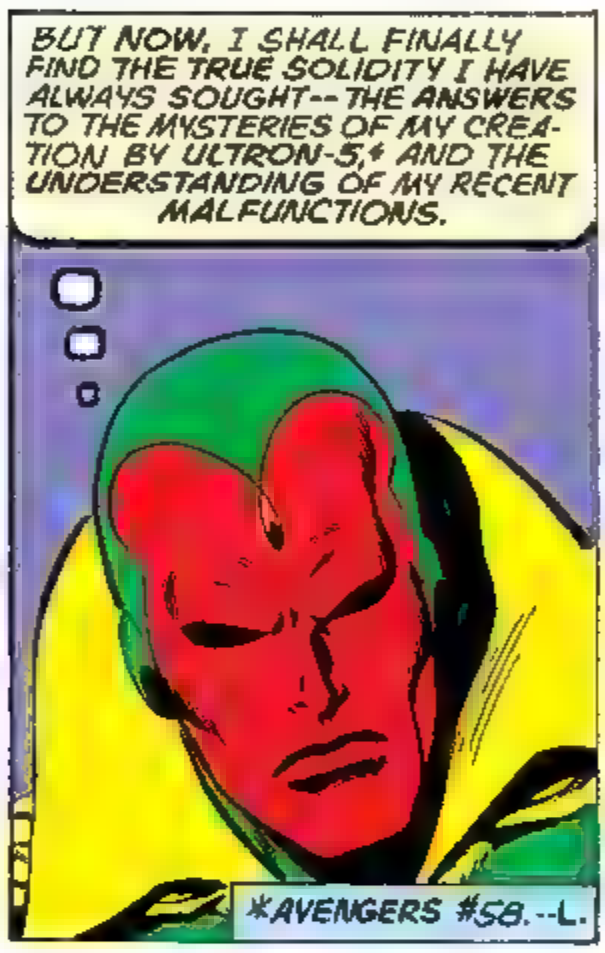
BUT THAT'S ANOTHER BOOK, FOR ANOTHER DAY. RIGHT HERE AND NOW, WE'RE READY TO BEGIN TWO OF THE MOST OFT-REQUESTED ORIGIN STORIES IN THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF COMICS.

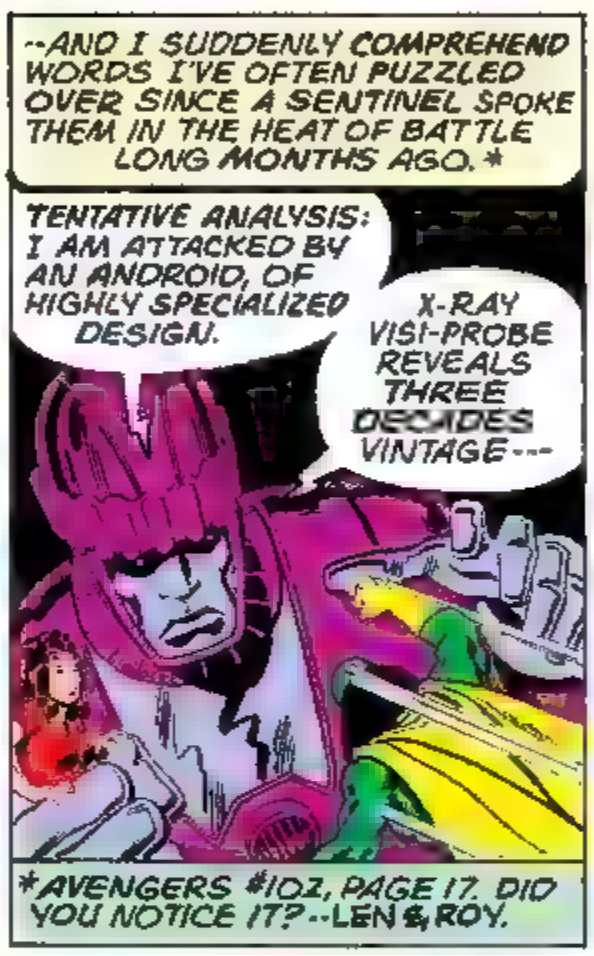
WE SAY "BEGIN" BECAUSE EACH STORY IS SO COMPLEX, SO ASTOUNDING, THAT NEITHER COULD BE PRESENTED WITH FULL JUSTICE IN JUST ONE ISSUE.

SO: SERIALIZATION.

SETTLE BACK NOW, AS MARVEL PRESENTS THE OPENING ACT IN --

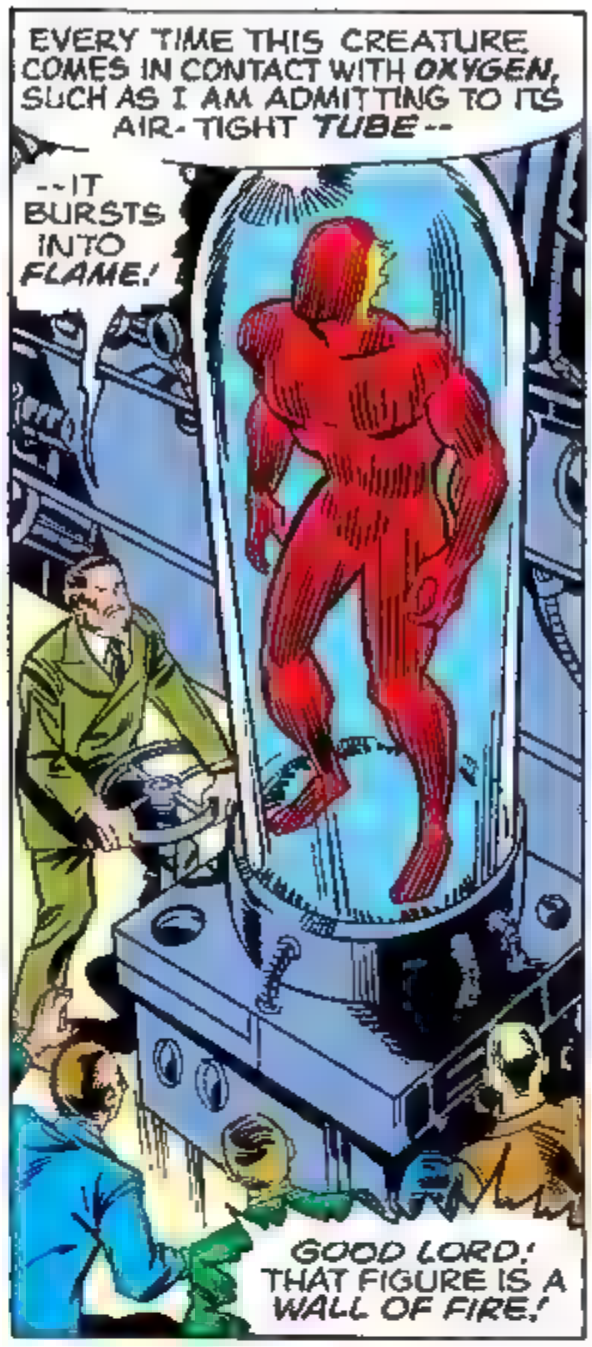




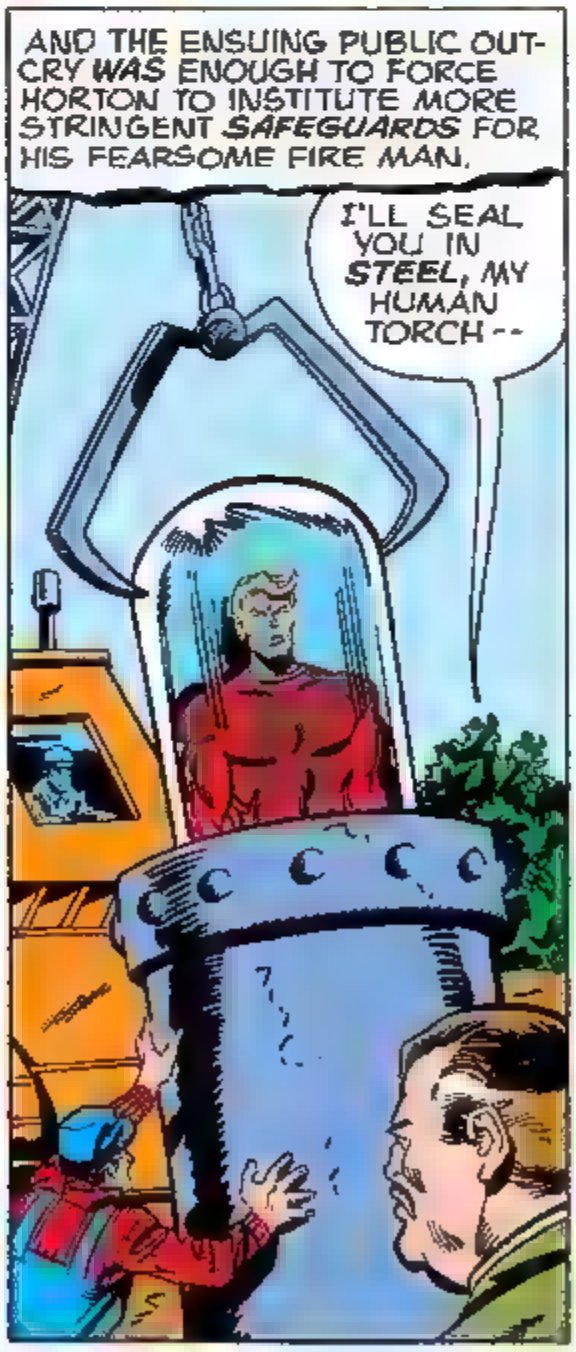


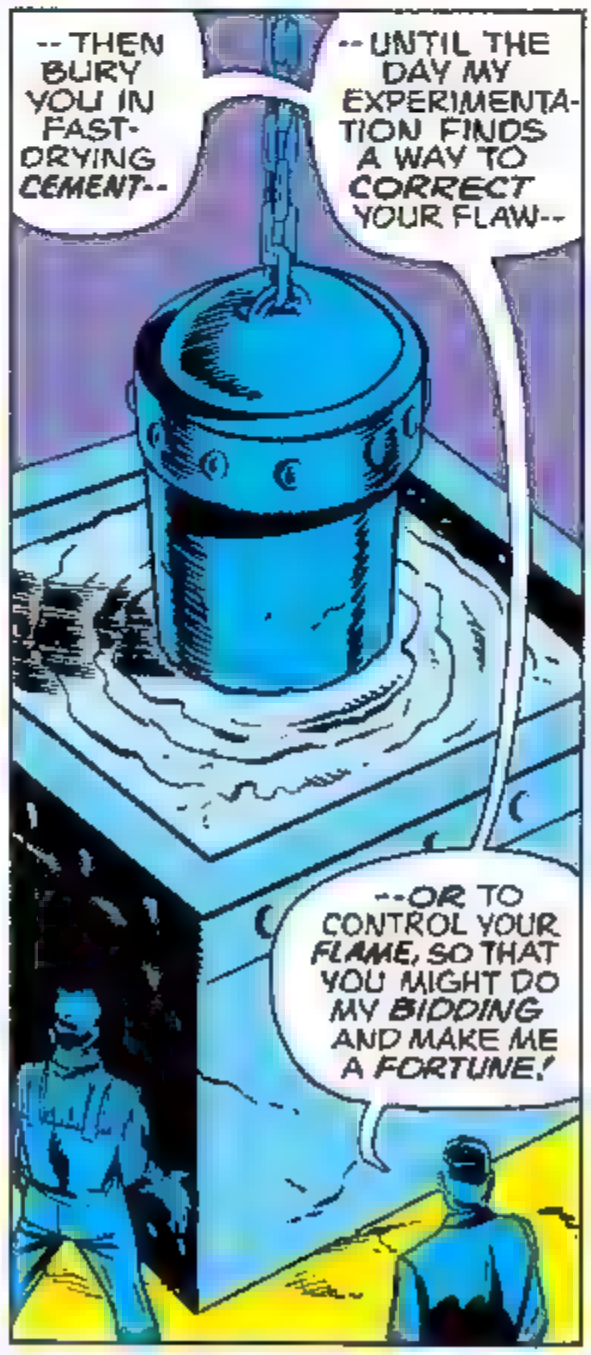
THAT'S QUITE A SERVICE YOU PROVIDE, VOICE.
IMMORTUS' MASTERY OF TIME TRAVEL IS ALL BUT TOTAL, VOYAGER.
NOW, PLEASE RELAX. YOU ARE APPROACHING NOVEMBER, 1939, AND SOON YOU WILL RE-ENTER THE NORMAL TIME CONTINUUM.
YOU WILL SEE AND HEAR ALL, BUT BE SEEN AND HEARD BY NONE. THIS GIFT OF MY MASTER'S INCLUDES ONLY OBSERVATION, NOT PARTICIPATION.
RELAX-- AND BEHOLD--

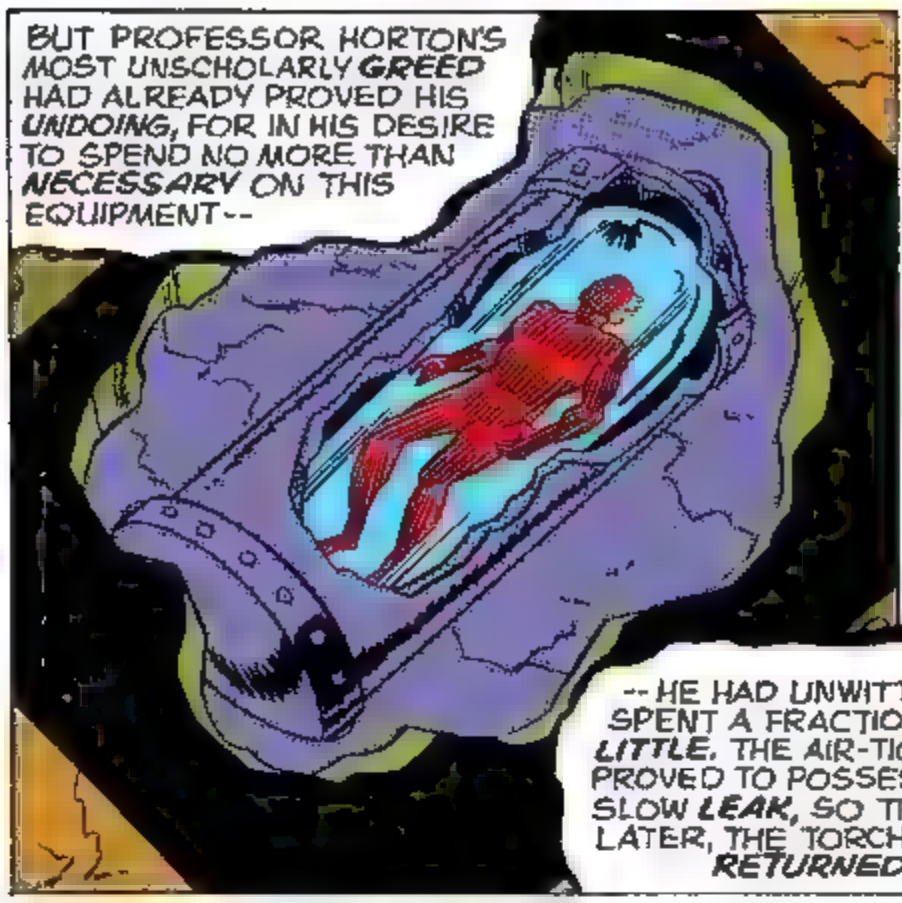
--THE LABORATORY OF PROF. PHINEAS T. HORTON! *
GENTLEMEN OF THE PRESS, I CALLED YOU HERE TO ANNOUNCE MY LATEST CREATION: A SYNTHETIC MAN!
IT SURPASSES ANYTHING ANY SCIENTIST HAS EVER DONE--
--THOUGH THERE REMAINS ONE DIFFICULTY I HAVE YET TO OVERCOME.
*THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTED FROM MARVEL COMICS #1. --LEN.


EVERY TIME THIS CREATURE COMES IN CONTACT WITH OXYGEN, SUCH AS I AM ADMITTING TO ITS AIR-TIGHT TUBE--
--IT BURSTS INTO FLAME!
GOOD LORD! THAT FIGURE IS A WALL OF FIRE!

HORTON, DESTROY THAT MAN BEFORE SOME MADMAN CAN GRASP ITS PRINCIPLES AND HURL IT AGAINST OUR CIVILIZATION!
NO!
I'M SORRY, GENTLEMEN, BUT DESTROYING HIM DOES NOT ANSWER ANYTHING!
THEN PERHAPS THE POWER OF THE PRESS WILL HELP CHANGE YOUR MIND!


AND THE ENSUING PUBLIC OUTCRY WAS ENOUGH TO FORCE HORTON TO INSTITUTE MORE STRINGENT SAFEGUARDS FOR HIS FEARSOME FIRE MAN.
I'LL SEAL YOU IN STEEL, MY HUMAN TORCH--

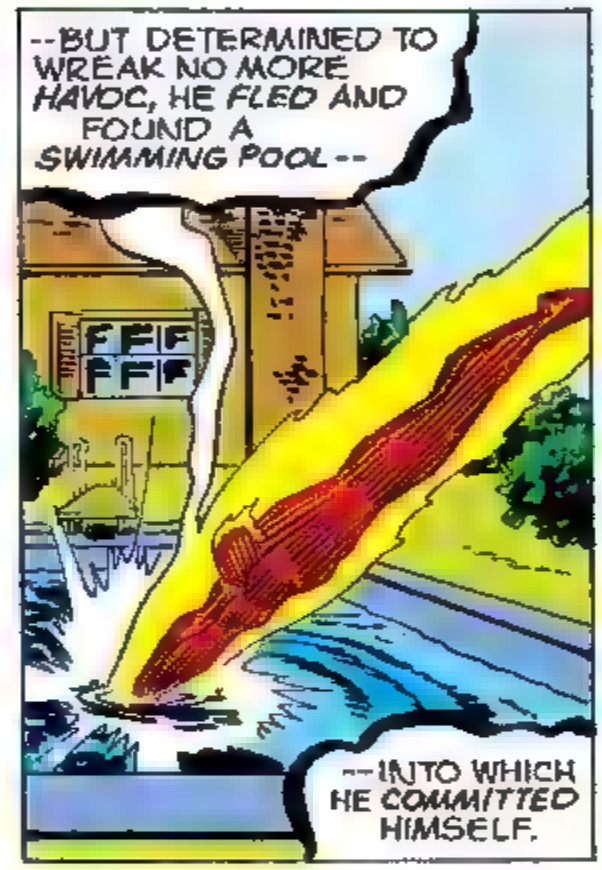

--THEN BURY YOU IN FAST-DRYING CEMENT--
--UNTIL THE DAY MY EXPERIMENTATION FINDS A WAY TO CORRECT YOUR FLAW--
--OR TO CONTROL YOUR FLAME, SO THAT YOU MIGHT DO MY BIDDING AND MAKE ME A FORTUNE!


BUT PROFESSOR HORTON'S MOST UNSCHOLARLY GREED HAD ALREADY PROVED HIS UNDOING, FOR IN HIS DESIRE TO SPEND NO MORE THAN NECESSARY ON THIS EQUIPMENT--
--HE HAD UNWITTINGLY SPENT A FRACTION TOO LITTLE. THE AIR-TIGHT TUBE PROVED TO POSSESS A VERY SLOW LEAK, SO THAT, DAYS LATER, THE TORCH'S FLAME RETURNED--

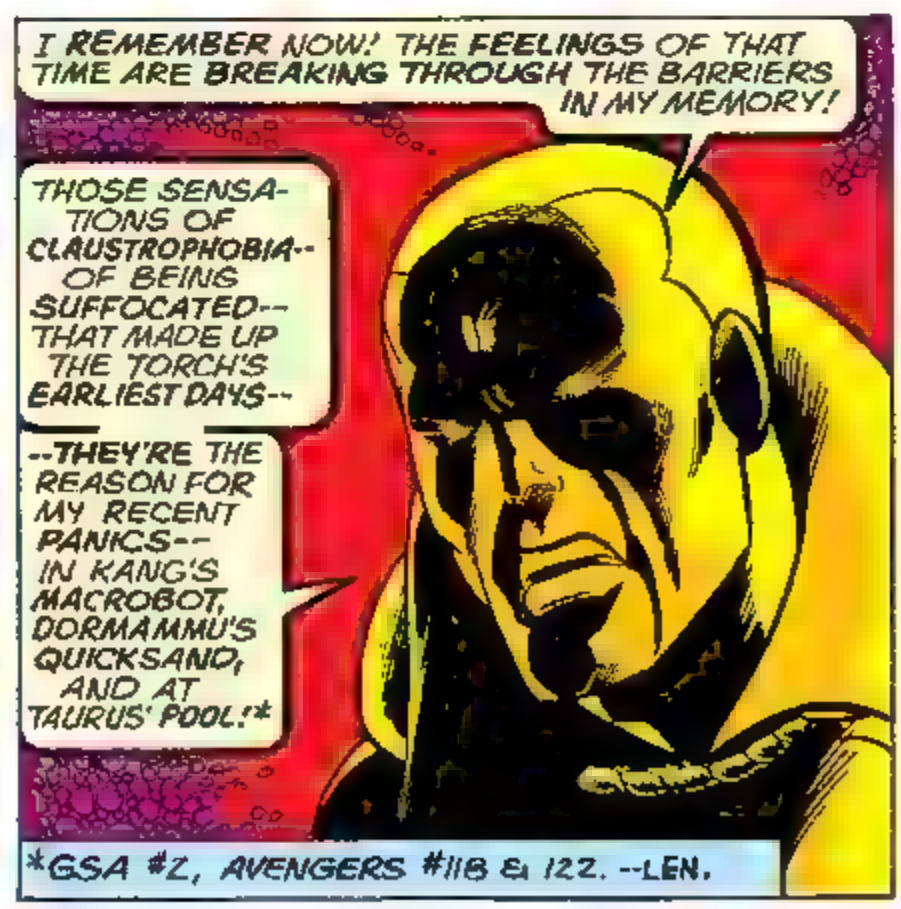
--AND THE RESULTANT EXPLOSION ROCKED THE CITY!

RUNNING WILD, CHILDLIKE, THE FREED TORCH INNOCENTLY SPREAD TERROR THROUGH THE CITY--

--UNTIL HE CAME TO REALIZE HOW DIFFERENT HE WAS FROM EVERYONE HE ENCOUNTERED --HOW LITTLE HE DESERVED THE NAME "HUMAN."
UNABLE, HIMSELF, TO CONTROL HIS FLAME--


--BUT DETERMINED TO WREAK NO MORE HAVOC, HE FLED AND FOUND A SWIMMING POOL--
--INTO WHICH HE COMMITTED HIMSELF.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE ESTATE HE HAD ENTERED WAS THE PROPERTY OF ONE SARDO, A RACKETS BOSS--
--WHO TRAPPED THE TORCH UNDER THE POOL'S WINTER GLASS COVER.
THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT!


I REMEMBER NOW! THE FEELINGS OF THAT TIME ARE BREAKING THROUGH THE BARRIERS IN MY MEMORY!
THOSE SENSATIONS OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA-- OF BEING SUFFOCATED-- THAT MADE UP THE TORCH'S EARLIEST DAYS--
--THEY'RE THE REASON FOR MY RECENT PANICS-- IN KANG'S MACROBOT, DORMAMMU'S QUICKSAND, AND AT TAURUS' POOL!*
*GSA #2, AVENGERS #118 & 122. --LEN.

YES--AND THOUGH YOU WERE SOON SET FREE, NOT ONE OF THE SURPRISES YOUR FUTURE HELD COULD EVER COMPLETELY BURY THOSE PRIMAL TRAUMATA.

WE NEED TARRY HERE NO LONGER. IT IS A DECADE LATER YOU MUST NEXT OBSERVE--

--WHEN THE HUMAN TORCH WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME--SO IT'S THERE WE JOURNEY NOW!

1939 PLAYS ON TO THE EMPTY HOUSES OF ETERNITY FOREVER. ALL THAT IS KNEW 1939 ONCE, NOW THEY REMEMBER IT DIMLY, IF AT ALL, AND ONLY THOSE WHO TRANSCEND TIME WILL EVER VISIT IT AGAIN...

A LIVING COSMOS CANNOT STAGNATE. TIME RUSHES UPON IT, CROWDING IT WITH NEWER MOMENTS EVER FRESHER DRAMAS--SUCH AS THIS ONE, IN SAIGON.

YOU MUST NOT PACE SO, MY FRIEND MOON-DRAGON HAS ALL BUT ARRIVED ON THIS PLANET, AND MANTIS IS BEGINNING HER INSTRUCTION IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE PLAN IS AS SOUND AS EVER.

I KNOW... I KNOW...

...BUT DESPITE ALL MY TRAINING BY THE PRIESTS OF PAMA, I AM YET A MAN OF THE WESTERN WORLD.

IT'S ALL SO INTRICATE--COMING TOGETHER AT SO MANY DIFFERENT POINTS FROM SO MANY DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS! IF ONE LITTLE THING GOES WRONG--!

NOTHING WILL GO WRONG.

SO YOU KEEP SAYING, BUT BLAST IT--

--MANTIS IS MY ONLY DAUGHTER!

WAIT, LIBRA... WAIT.

WAIT FOR...

THE ORIGIN OF MANTIS

(INCLUDING "THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE.")

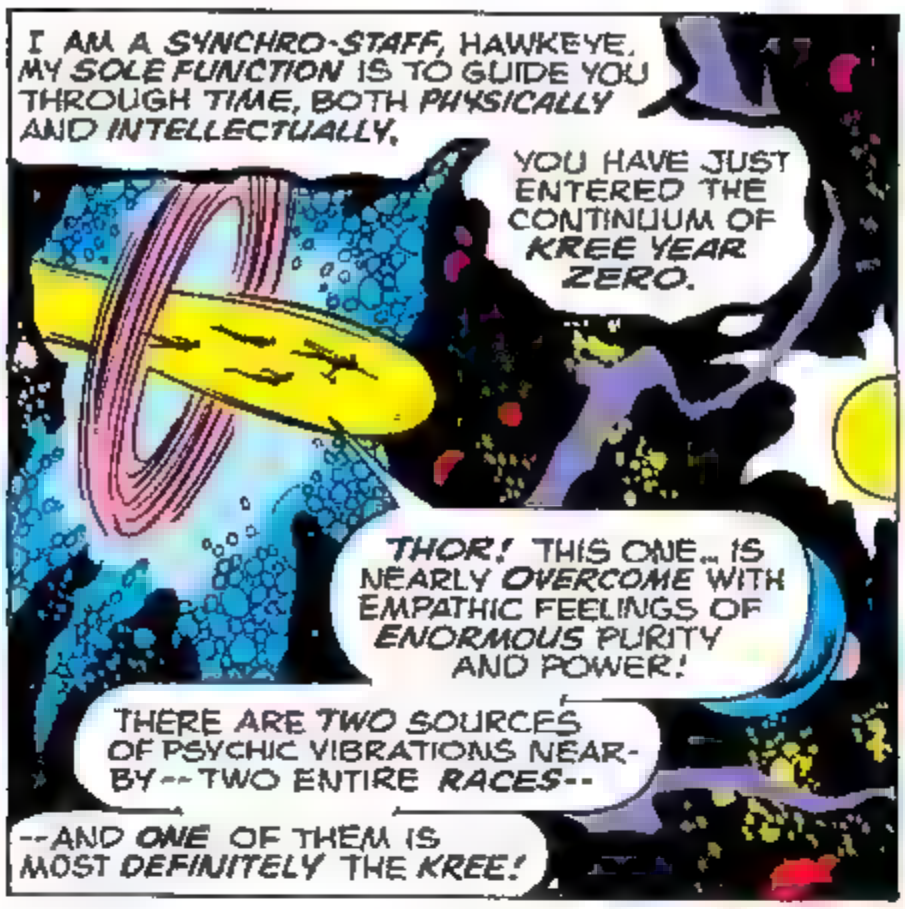
* IF YOU'LL RECALL, AVENGERS #123 WAS SUBTITLED "AN ORIGIN FOR MANTIS." NOW YOU'LL SEE WHY.--L.

REMEMBER, THOR, YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE OBSERVERS ONLY!

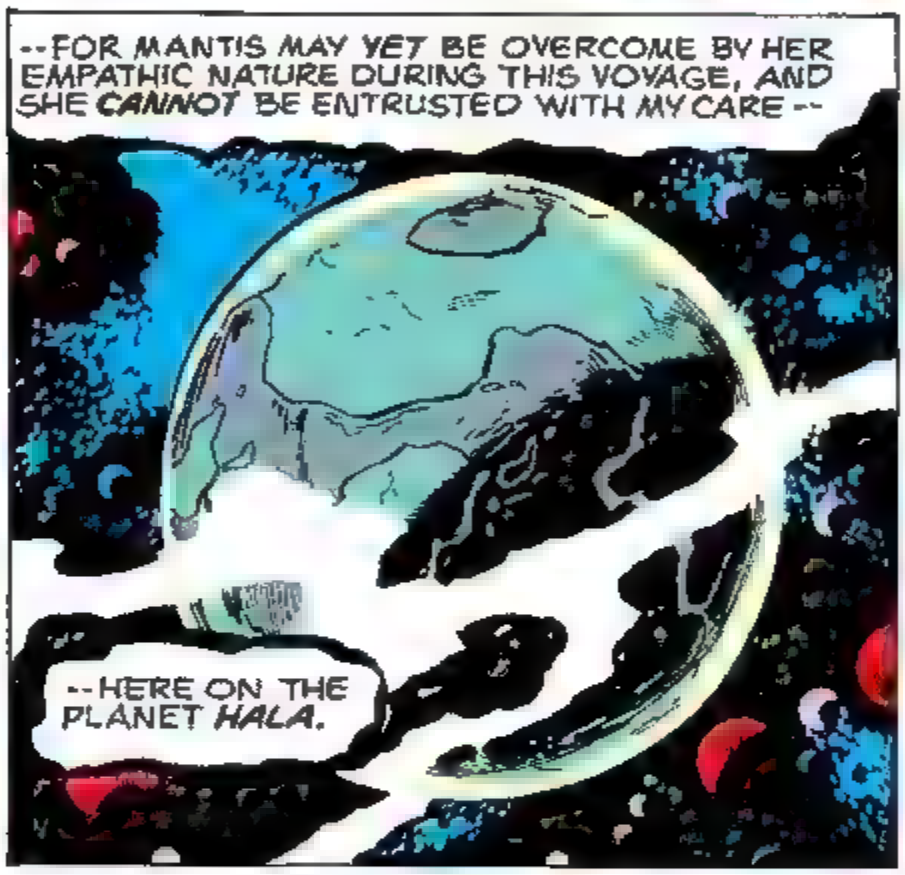
AS WITH THE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT'S VOYAGES, NON-INVOLVEMENT IS PARAMOUNT! THE INTERJECTION OF UNCONTEMPORANEOUS ELEMENTS CAN POLLUTE THE TIME-STREAM!

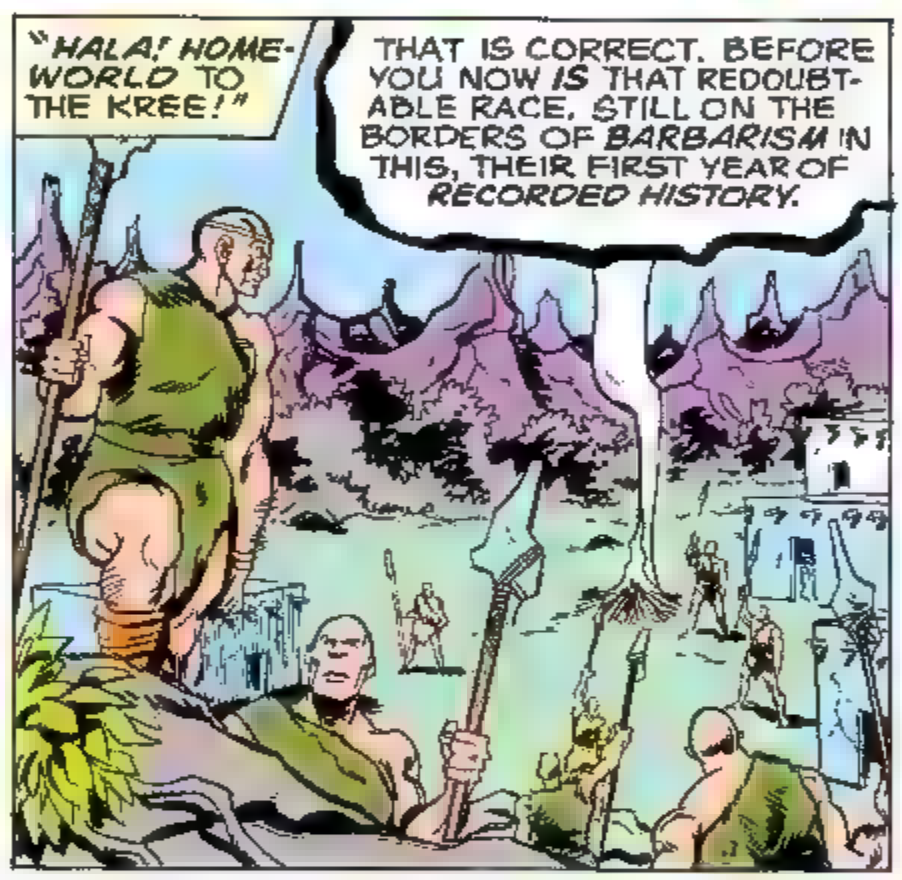
SHEESH! DO TALKING STICKS HAVE TA MAKE SUCH A BIG DEAL OUTTA TALKING?

IT MAY BE YOUR ONLY TRICK, BUT GEE--!


I AM A SYNCHRO-STAFF, HAWKEYE. MY SOLE FUNCTION IS TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH TIME, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND INTELLECTUALLY.
YOU HAVE JUST ENTERED THE CONTINUUM OF KREE YEAR ZERO.
THOR! THIS ONE... IS NEARLY OVERCOME WITH EMPATHIC FEELINGS OF ENORMOUS PURITY AND POWER!
THERE ARE TWO SOURCES OF PSYCHIC VIBRATIONS NEAR-BY -- TWO ENTIRE RACES --
-- AND ONE OF THEM IS MOST DEFINITELY THE KREE!

YES: TWO RACES, TWO INSIGNIFICANT RACES AT THIS POINT IN TIME, YET TWO RACES DES-TINED TO BLAZE A TRAIL ACROSS THE HEAVENS!
GRIP ME TIGHTLY, THUNDER GOD --

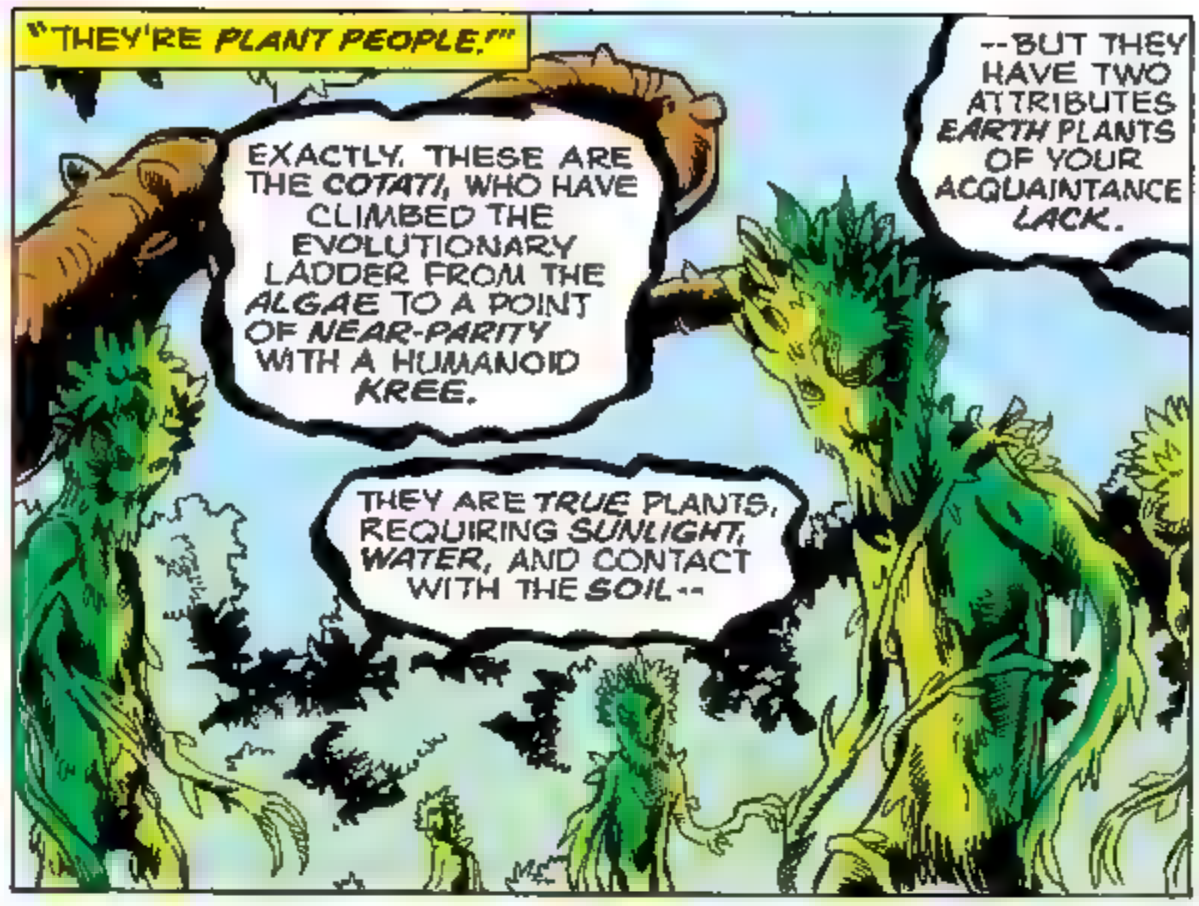

-- FOR MANTIS MAY YET BE OVERCOME BY HER EMPATHIC NATURE DURING THIS VOYAGE, AND SHE CANNOT BE ENTRUSTED WITH MY CARE --
-- HERE ON THE PLANET HALA.

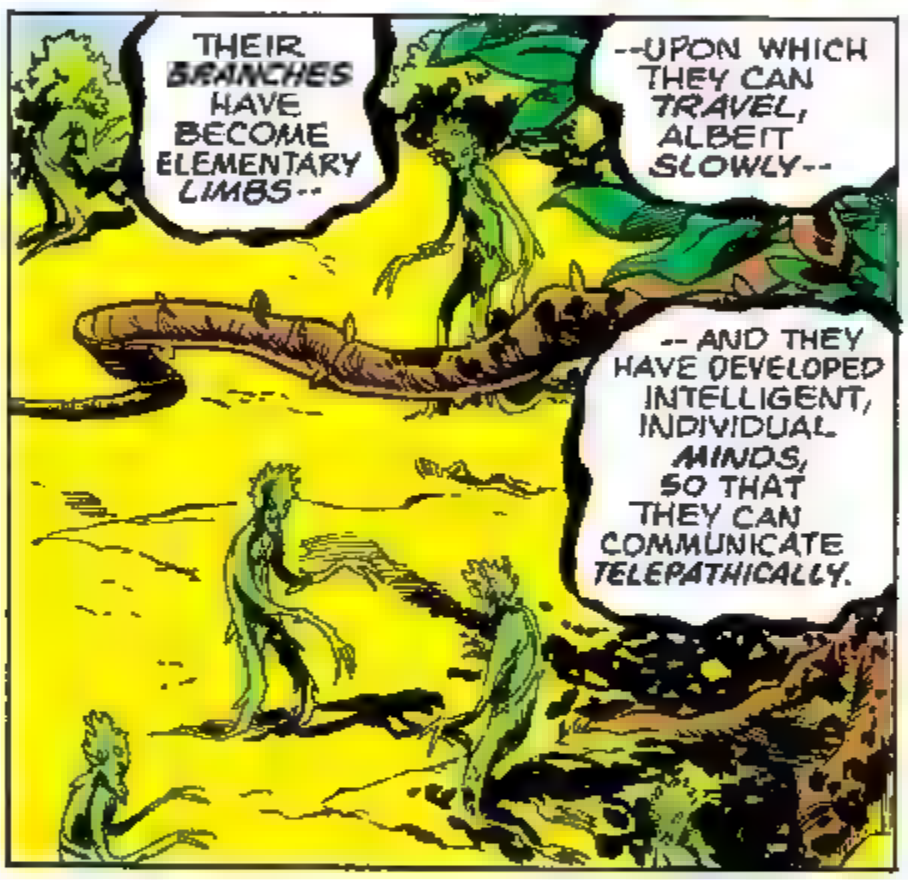

"HALA! HOME-WORLD TO THE KREE!"
THAT IS CORRECT. BEFORE YOU NOW IS THAT REDOUBT-ABLE RACE, STILL ON THE BORDERS OF BARBARISM IN THIS, THEIR FIRST YEAR OF RECORDED HISTORY.

ALREADY, THEY ARE A WARLIKE PEOPLE -- STRONG, BRUTAL, AND QUICK TO ANGER.
THEIR LEADER IS MORAG. HE IS THEIR MIGHTIEST MALE --

-- AND THEIR MOST DARING HUNTER. THE KREE, BEING MEAT EATERS, MUST FACE FEROCIOUS BEASTS EVERY DAY IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, AND MORAG ATTACKS ONLY THE LARGEST.
"WHAT ABOUT THAT OTHER RACE, STICK?"

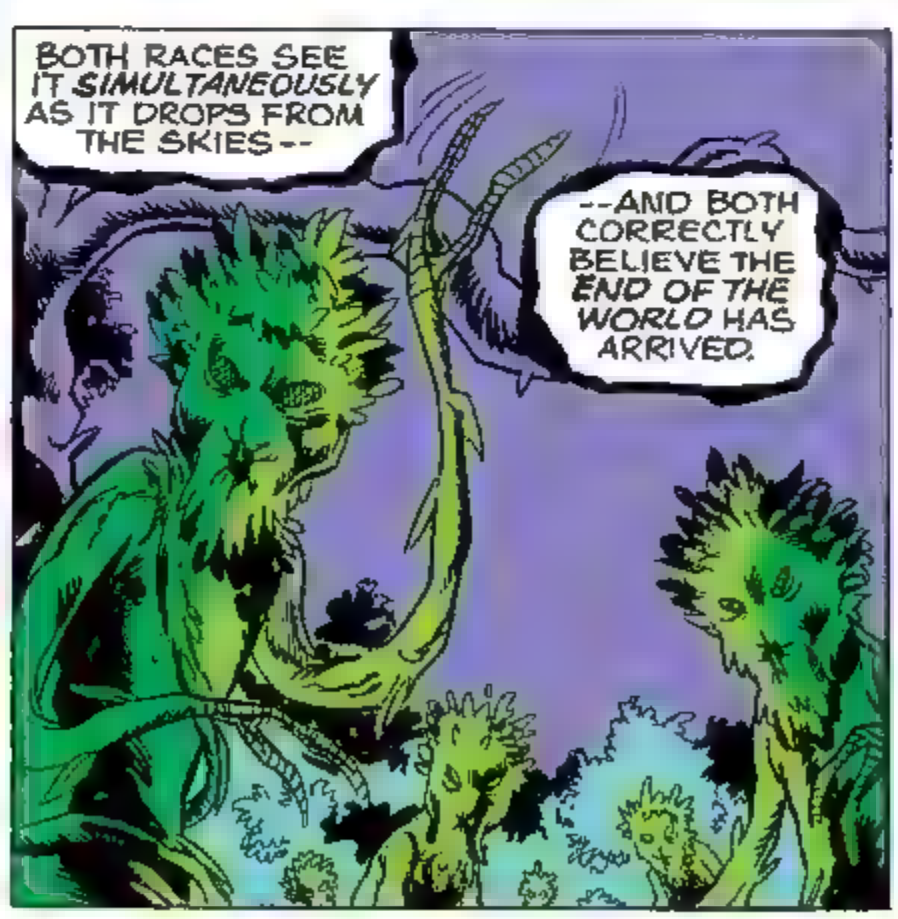
THEY INHABIT THE OTHER HALF OF HALA, HAWKEYE. LET ME TAKE YOU THERE, SO YOU CAN SEE WHY.
HOLY JOE!


"THEY'RE PLANT PEOPLE!"
EXACTLY. THESE ARE THE COTATI, WHO HAVE CLIMBED THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER FROM THE ALGAE TO A POINT OF NEAR-PARITY WITH A HUMANOID KREE.
--BUT THEY HAVE TWO ATTRIBUTES EARTH PLANTS OF YOUR ACQUAINTANCE LACK.
THEY ARE TRUE PLANTS, REQUIRING SUNLIGHT, WATER, AND CONTACT WITH THE SOIL--


THEIR BRANCHES HAVE BECOME ELEMENTARY LIMBS--
--UPON WHICH THEY CAN TRAVEL, ALBEIT SLOWLY--
-- AND THEY HAVE DEVELOPED INTELLIGENT, INDIVIDUAL MINDS, SO THAT THEY CAN COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY.

I TAKE IT EACH SIDE LEAVES THE OTHER STRICTLY ALONE--OR ELSE THE KREE WOULD HARVEST THESE CREATURES FOR BREAKFAST SOME MORNING!
THE MEAT-EATERS CONSIDER ALL PLANTS BENEATH THEIR NOTICE, AND THE COTATI CONSIDER THE BARBARIANS FRENETIC AND UNSTABLE.
HOLD, STAFF! WHAT BE THIS WHICH HITHER COMES?

THIS IS DESTINY--
-- IN THE FORM OF A STAR-SHIP.


BOTH RACES SEE IT SIMULTANEOUSLY AS IT DROPS FROM THE SKIES--
--AND BOTH CORRECTLY BELIEVE THE END OF THE WORLD HAS ARRIVED.

"HEY! I JUST *SAW* THIS FLICK, THE OTHER NIGHT ON *CHANNEL 5!* 'THE DAY *HALA* STOOD STILL,' RIGHT?"

"*PLEASE* BE SILENT, HAWKEYE. THIS ONE DOES NOT WISH TO BE DISTRACTED WITH *FRIVOLITY.*"

"*WHEW! YES, MA'AM!*"

"*ODIN'S BLOOD!* THE CREATURES *WITHIN* ARE THE HEREDITARY *ENEMIES* OF THE KREE: *SKRULLS!*"

"I NEVER KNEW THEY WERE SO MUCH FURTHER *ADVANCED,* DID YOU, THOR?"

THIS IS THE *FIRST CONTACT* BETWEEN KREE AND SKRULL-- INDEED, THE FIRST EXTRA-PLANETARY CONTACT *EVER* FOR THE KREE.

"*QUIET,* STICK. THE *BIG GREEN CHEESE* IS GONNA SPEAK."

CREATURES OF *HALA*--BEFORE YOU STANDS *DORREK,* EMPEROR TO A WORLD WHOSE NAME NO *OUTWORLDER* COULD EVER *PRONOUNCE,* AND TO A RACE NAMED *SKRULL!*

WE ARE, TO PUT IT SIMPLY, A *PROUD* PEOPLE! SOME MIGHT EVEN CALL US *IMPERIOUS!* YET WE FIND OUR OPINION BORNE OUT *AGAIN* AND *AGAIN* IN THE *HEIGHTS* OUR CIVILIZATION HAS REACHED!

IN THE PAST DECADE, WE HAVE EVEN PERFECTED *INTER-STELLAR VESSELS*--

--AND IN MY SCOUTS' JOURNEYINGS *SINCE,* WE HAVE GONE BEYOND OUR *OWN* WORLD TO FIND THAT NO OTHER RACE *ANYWHERE* APPROACHES US!

ahem!

BUT SKRULLS ARE NOT *WARRIORS!* WE REFUSE TO SULLY OUR HANDS WITH SUCH *COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE* OCCUPATIONS!

RATHER, I JOURNEY TO EACH INHABITED PLANET MY SCOUTS DISCOVER, TO OFFER A MORE BENEFICIAL *PROPOSITION*--

--WE SHALL PROVIDE OUR *KNOWLEDGE* AND *TECHNOLOGY* IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR *LOYALTY*-- AND, OF COURSE, YOUR *RESOURCES,* SO THAT WE MAY CREATE NEW WONDERS FOR *ALL!*

OH, THERE *IS* ONE *MORE* POINT: WE WISH TO AVOID ANY *DISSENTION* BETWEEN HALA'S TWO RACES REGARDING WHICH WILL *REPRESENT* THE PLANET TO US--

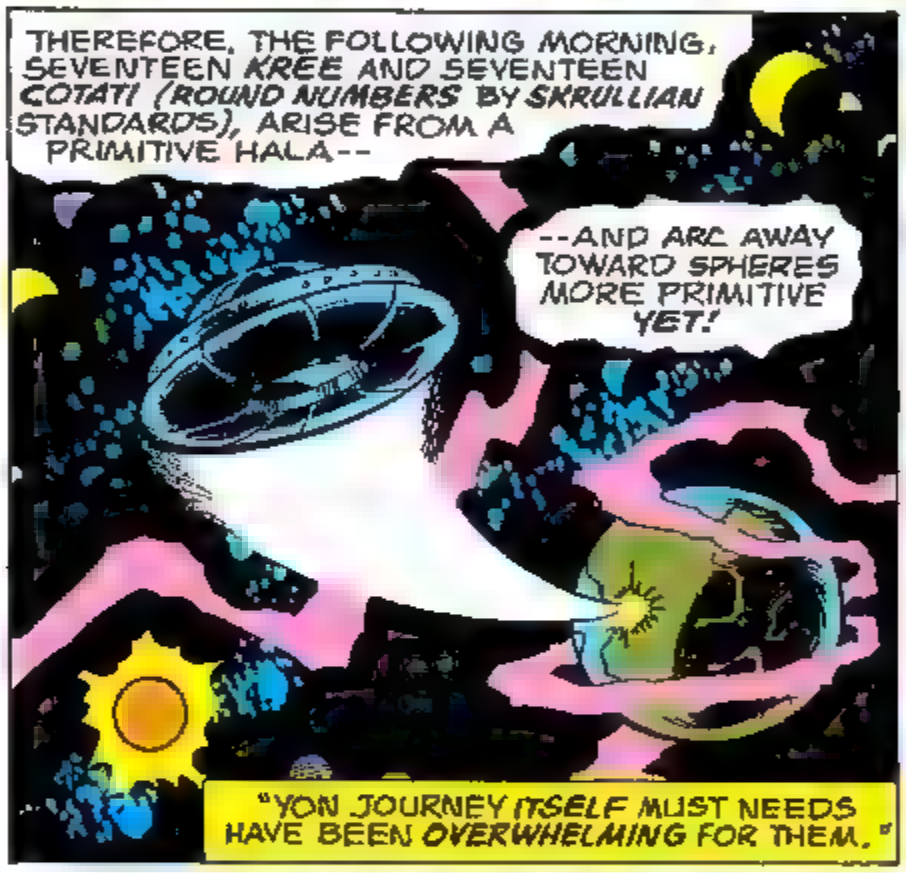
--SO WE *FURTHER* PROPOSE A SMALL *TEST,* TO *SETTLE* THE QUESTION *DEFINITIVELY* AND *PERMANENTLY.*

IN RESPONSE, DORREK HEARS A VOICE IN HIS MIND: "WHAT TEST?"

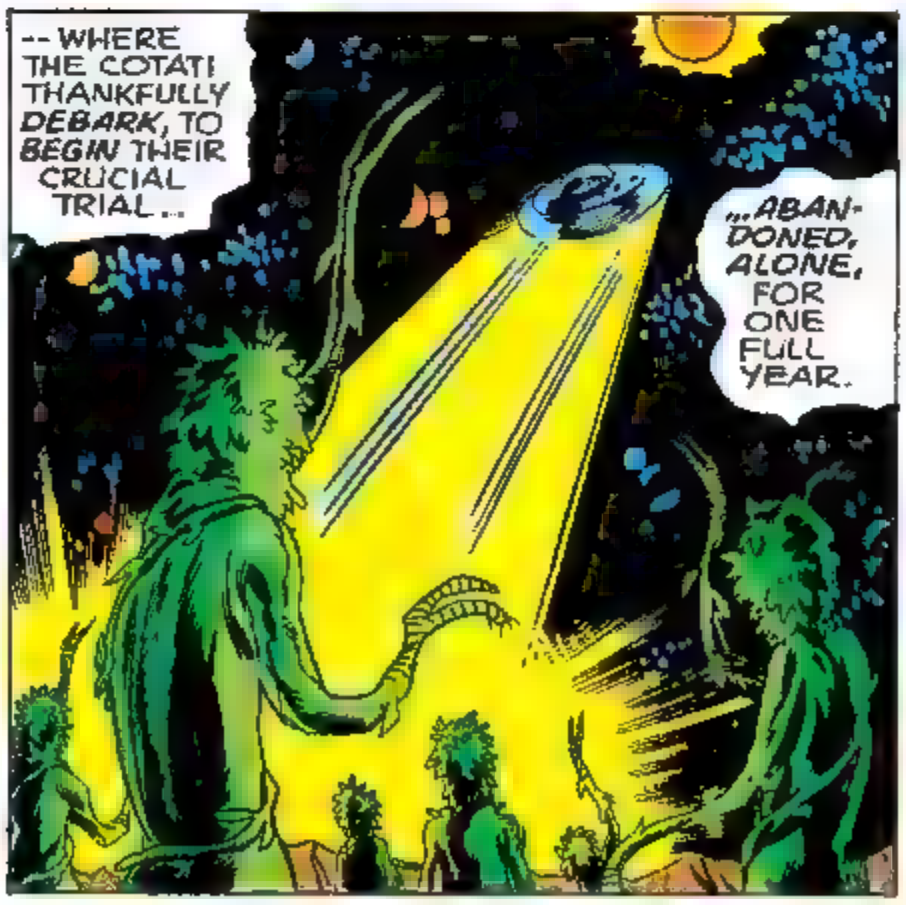
WE SHALL CONDUCT A SELECT PARTY FROM EACH RACE TO A DIFFERENT UNINHABITED PLANETOID, TO REMAIN FOR ONE YEAR WITH COMPLETE SUPPLIES.
AT THE TERMINATION AT THAT TIME, WHICHEVER GROUP HAS DONE THE MOST WITH THEMSELVES SHALL BE ADJUDGED MOST WORTHY!
AGREED?

THE DECISION IS SIMPLE FOR THE COTATI: THEY SENSE ARROGANCE BUT NO DECEIT IN THE SKRULLS, AND THEY WISH TO GROW. THEY ACCEPT.
BUT THE KREE ARE TOO BARBARIC TO ALLOW THEMSELVES A LUXURY LIKE TRUST...

...SO THEY DEBATE THEIR COURSE ALL THE REST OF THE DAY.
IT IS MORAG, MIGHTY LEADER, WHO DECIDES THE ISSUE... BECAUSE HE HAS HEARD NO WAY TO GRACEFULLY DECLINE.

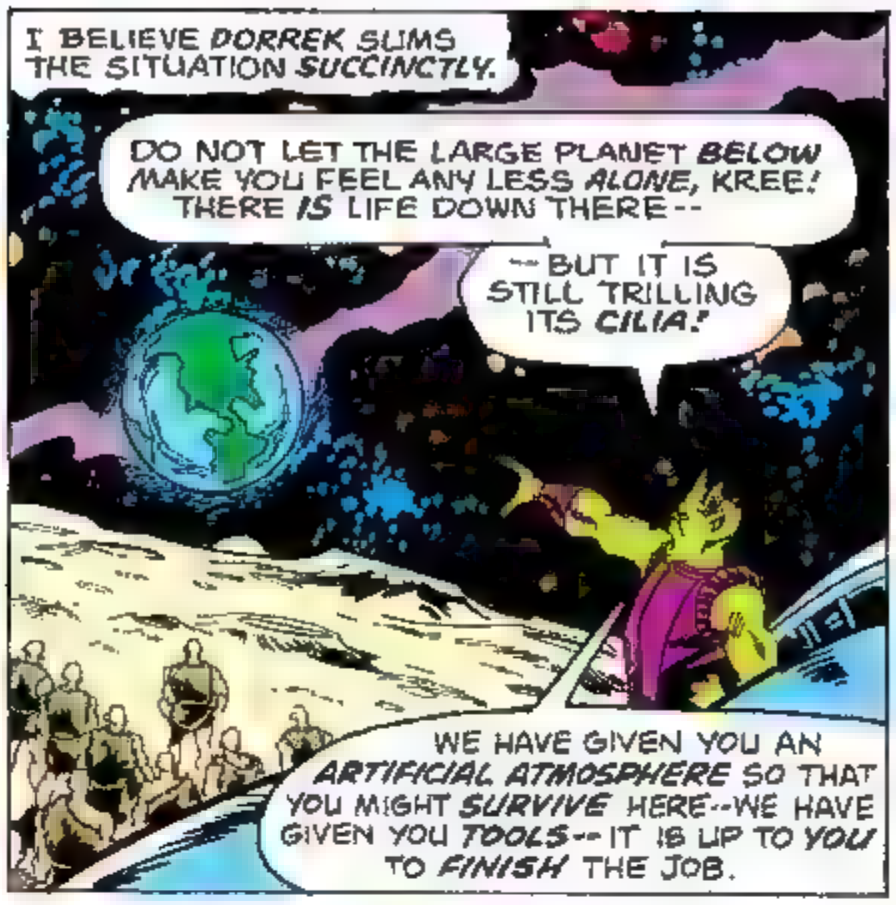

THEREFORE, THE FOLLOWING MORNING, SEVENTEEN KREE AND SEVENTEEN COTATI (ROUND NUMBERS BY SKRULLIAN STANDARDS), ARISE FROM A PRIMITIVE HALA--
--AND ARC AWAY TOWARD SPHERES MORE PRIMITIVE YET!
"YON JOURNEY ITSELF MUST NEEDS HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMING FOR THEM."

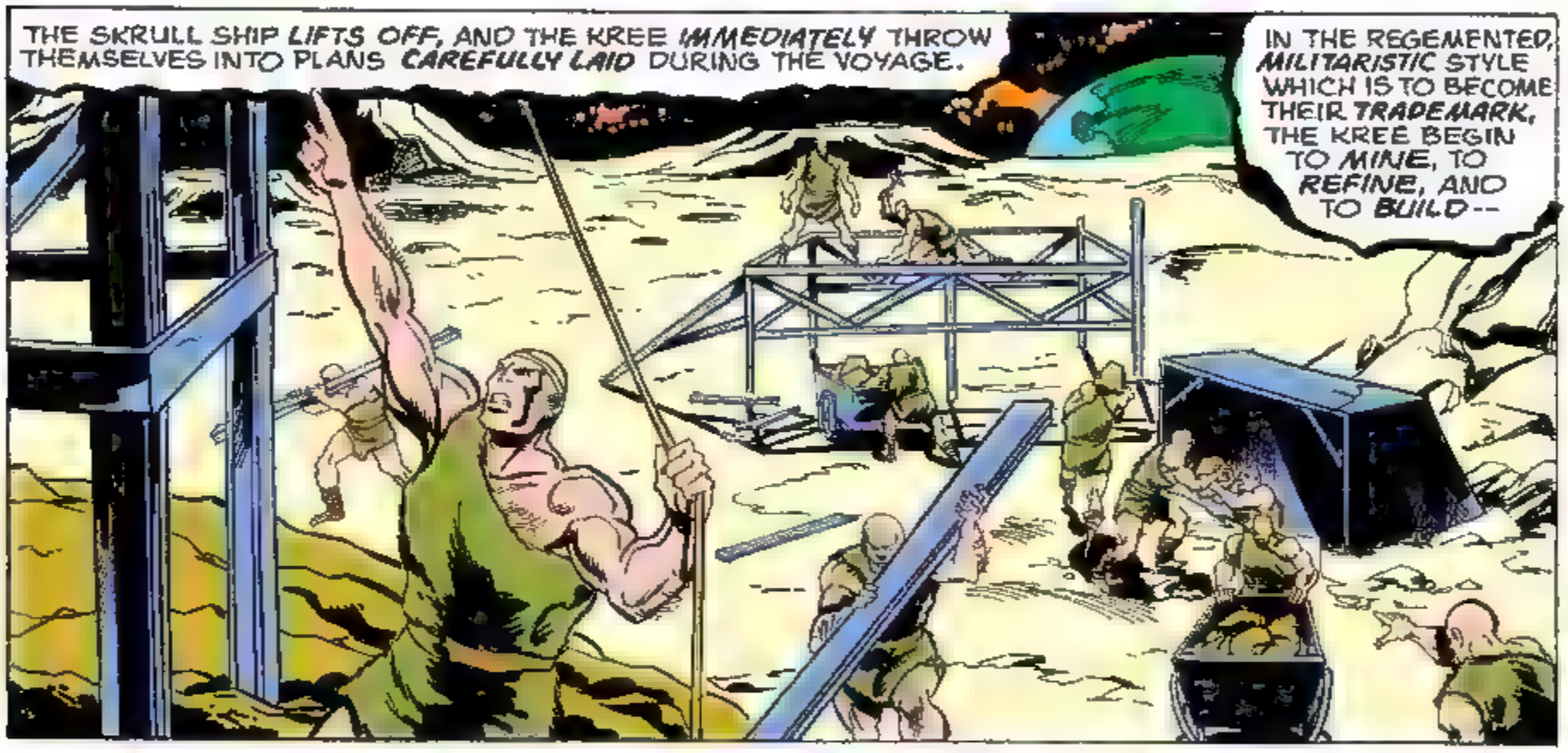
IT WAS, THUNDER GOD--ESPECIALLY FOR THE COTATI, WHO, BEREFT OF THEIR FELLOWS FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER...
...SUFFERED A PSYCHIC ISOLATION THAT NEARLY PLUNGED THEM INTO SHOCK FOR DAYS.
"THIS ONE UNDERSTANDS SUCH A SENSATION ONLY TOO WELL."
IN TIME, NOW, THE SHIP REACHES A LIKELY PLANETOID--


--WHERE THE COTATI THANKFULLY DEBARK, TO BEGIN THEIR CRUCIAL TRIAL...
...ABANDONED, ALONE, FOR ONE FULL YEAR.

YOU MEAN, THE SKRULLS ARE REALLY GOIN' THROUGH WITH IT? I THOUGHT SURE THIS WAS ALL A TRICK OF SOME SORT!
NO, ARCHER. JUST AS WE SEE AND HEAR THIS HISTORY, SO, TOO, DOES THIS ONE HAVE EMPATHY WITH IT.
THE COTATI HAVE NOT BEEN FOOLED.
A MAN MAY BE TOO CYNICAL, HAWKEYE
I'M NOT SO SURE, THOR--
--BUT WAIT! LOOK THERE!

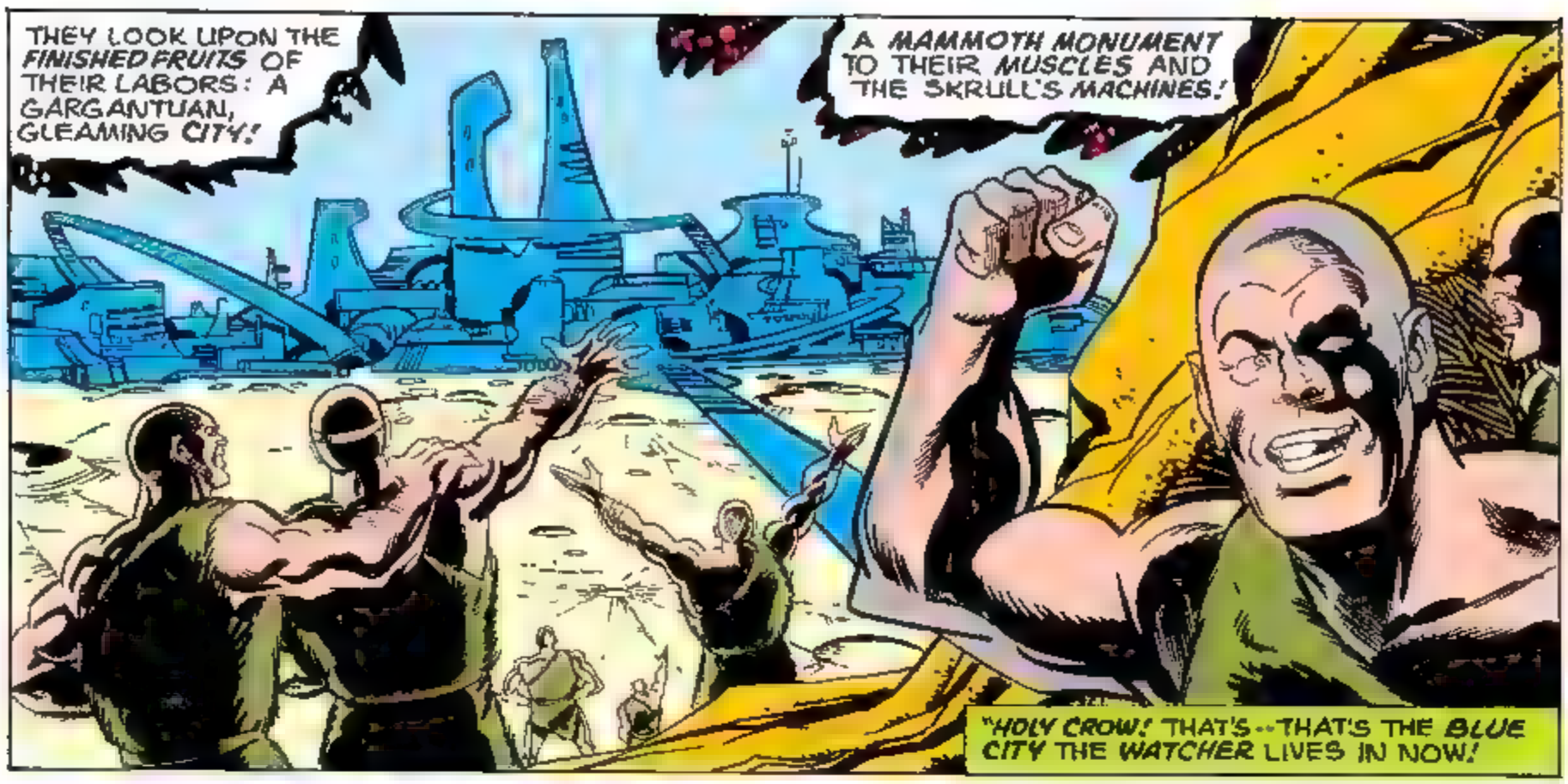
"THE SKRULLS ARE TAKING THE KREE TO EARTH'S MOON!"
WHY NOT, IRON MAN?


I BELIEVE DORREK SUMS THE SITUATION SUCCINCTLY.
DO NOT LET THE LARGE PLANET BELOW MAKE YOU FEEL ANY LESS ALONE, KREE! THERE IS LIFE DOWN THERE--
--BUT IT IS STILL TRILLING ITS CILIA!
WE HAVE GIVEN YOU AN ARTIFICIAL ATMOSPHERE SO THAT YOU MIGHT SURVIVE HERE--WE HAVE GIVEN YOU TOOLS--IT IS UP TO YOU TO FINISH THE JOB.

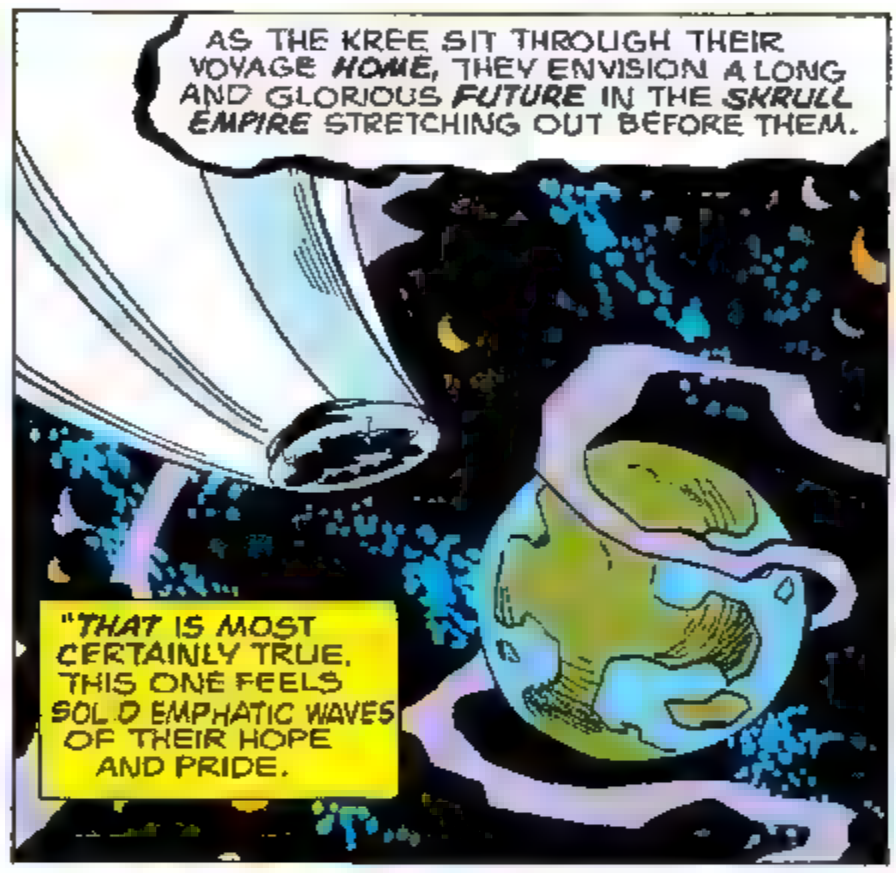

THE SKRULL SHIP LIFTS OFF, AND THE KREE IMMEDIATELY THROW THEMSELVES INTO PLANS CAREFULLY LAID DURING THE VOYAGE.
IN THE REGEMENTED, MILITARISTIC STYLE WHICH IS TO BECOME THEIR TRADEMARK, THE KREE BEGIN TO MINE, TO REFINE, AND TO BUILD--

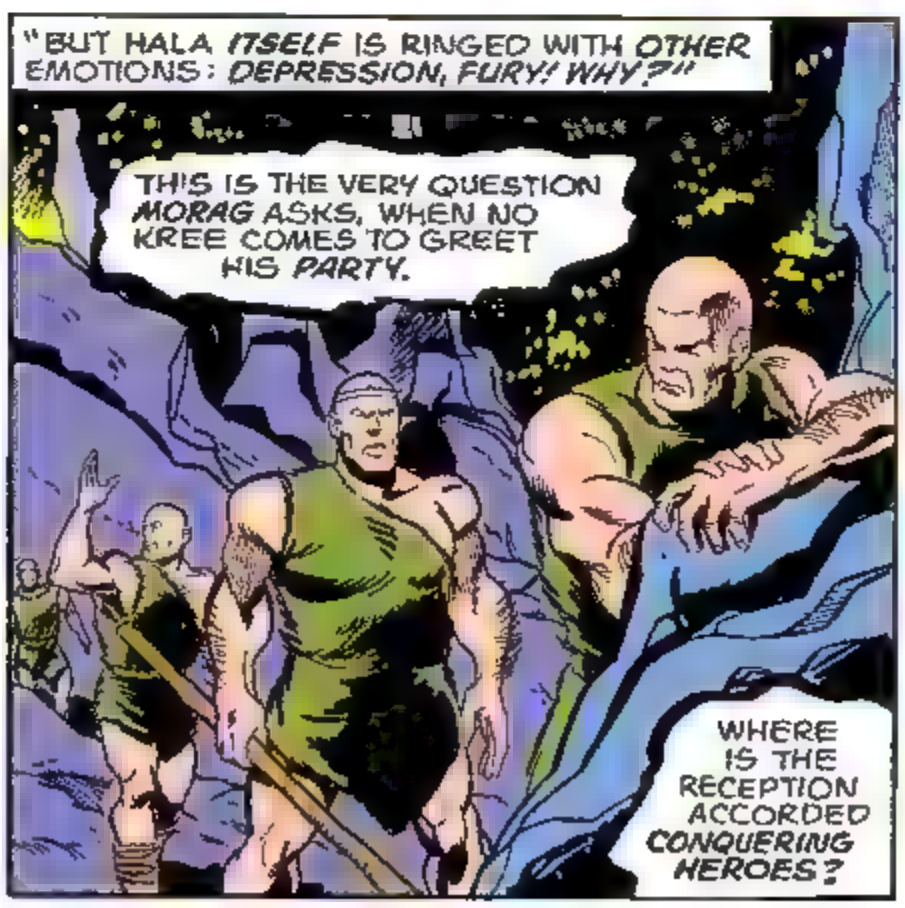
--MAKING FULL USE OF THE RUDIMENTARY TECHNOLOGY LEFT THEM BY THE SKRULLS, AND THE NEAR-PERPETUAL DAY-LIGHT. EACH MAN WORKS UNTIL HE DROPS IN HIS TRACKS--
--THEN SLUMBERS FITFULLY UNTIL HE CAN RISE AGAIN, TO WORK AGAIN.

FOR ONE FULL YEAR, THIS IS THEIR UNBROKEN ROUTINE. AND THEN, AT LAST--


THEY LOOK UPON THE FINISHED FRUITS OF THEIR LABORS: A GARGANTUAN, GLEAMING CITY!
A MAMMOTH MONUMENT TO THEIR MUSCLES AND THE SKRULL'S MACHINES!
"HOLY CROW! THAT'S--THAT'S THE BLUE CITY THE WATCHER LIVES IN NOW!

"SO THAT'S WHERE IT CAME FROM! I'VE WONDERED ABOUT EVER SINCE THE F.F. FOUND IT AS A DECAYING RUIN YEARS AGO!" *
BUT IT IS NOT DECAYING AT THIS POINT IN TIME--AND THE RETURNING SKRULLS ARE EXTREMELY IMPRESSED.
*FF #13--LEN.

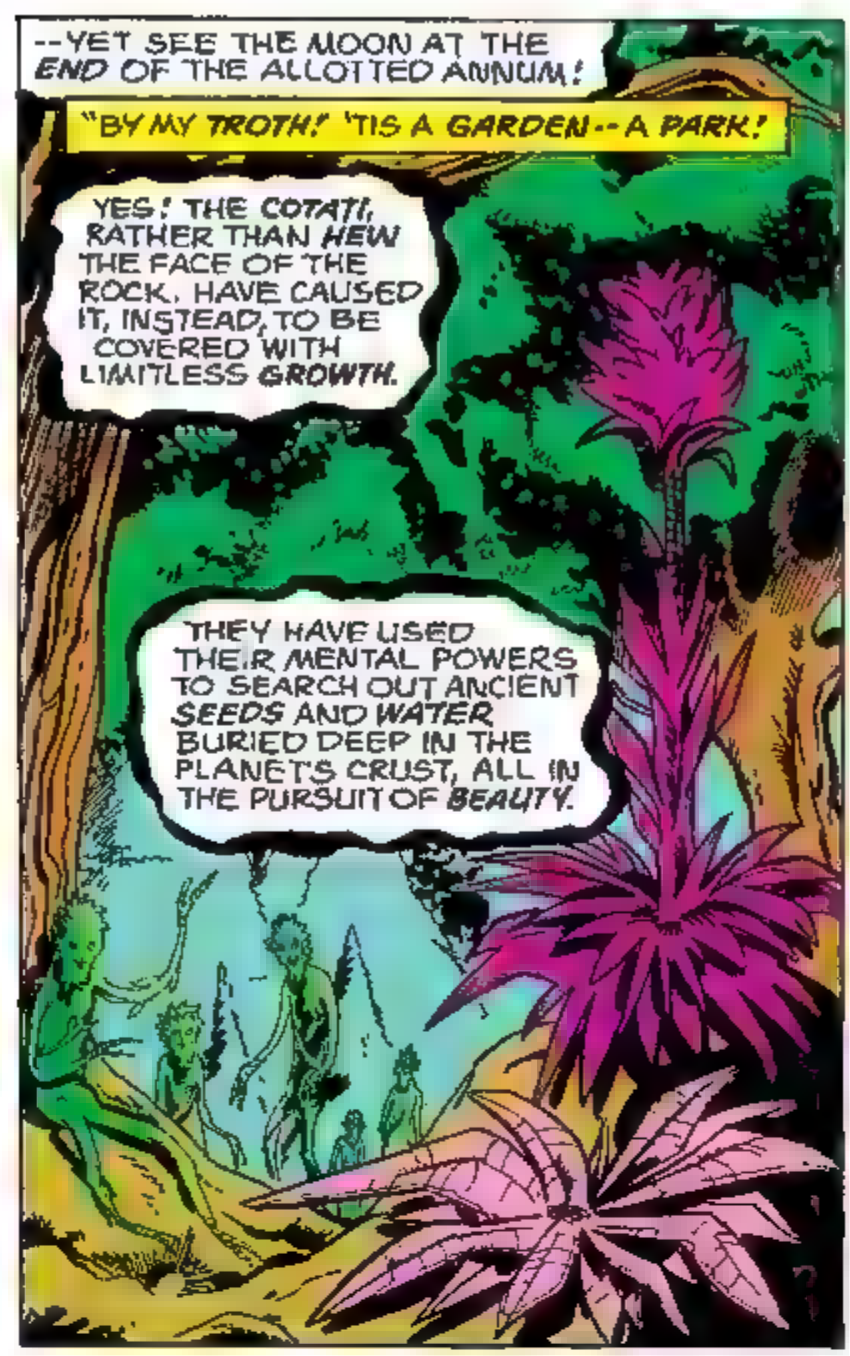

AS THE KREE SIT THROUGH THEIR VOYAGE HOME, THEY ENVISION A LONG AND GLORIOUS FUTURE IN THE SKRULL EMPIRE STRETCHING OUT BEFORE THEM.
"THAT IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE. THIS ONE FEELS SOLID EMPHATIC WAVES OF THEIR HOPE AND PRIDE.


"BUT HALA ITSELF IS RINGED WITH OTHER EMOTIONS: DEPRESSION, FURY! WHY?"
THIS IS THE VERY QUESTION MORAG ASKS, WHEN NO KREE COMES TO GREET HIS PARTY.
WHERE IS THE RECEPTION ACCORDED CONQUERING HEROES?

YOUR EFFORTS HAVE ALL BEEN FOR NAUGHT, MY CHIEFTAIN.
THE OTHER SKRULLS ARE MORE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE SUCCESSES OF THE COTATI.

WHAT IS IT THE PLANT-CREATURES HAVE DONE? THIS ONE SENSES THAT SHE MUST KNOW!
AND SO YOU SHALL, MANTIS.

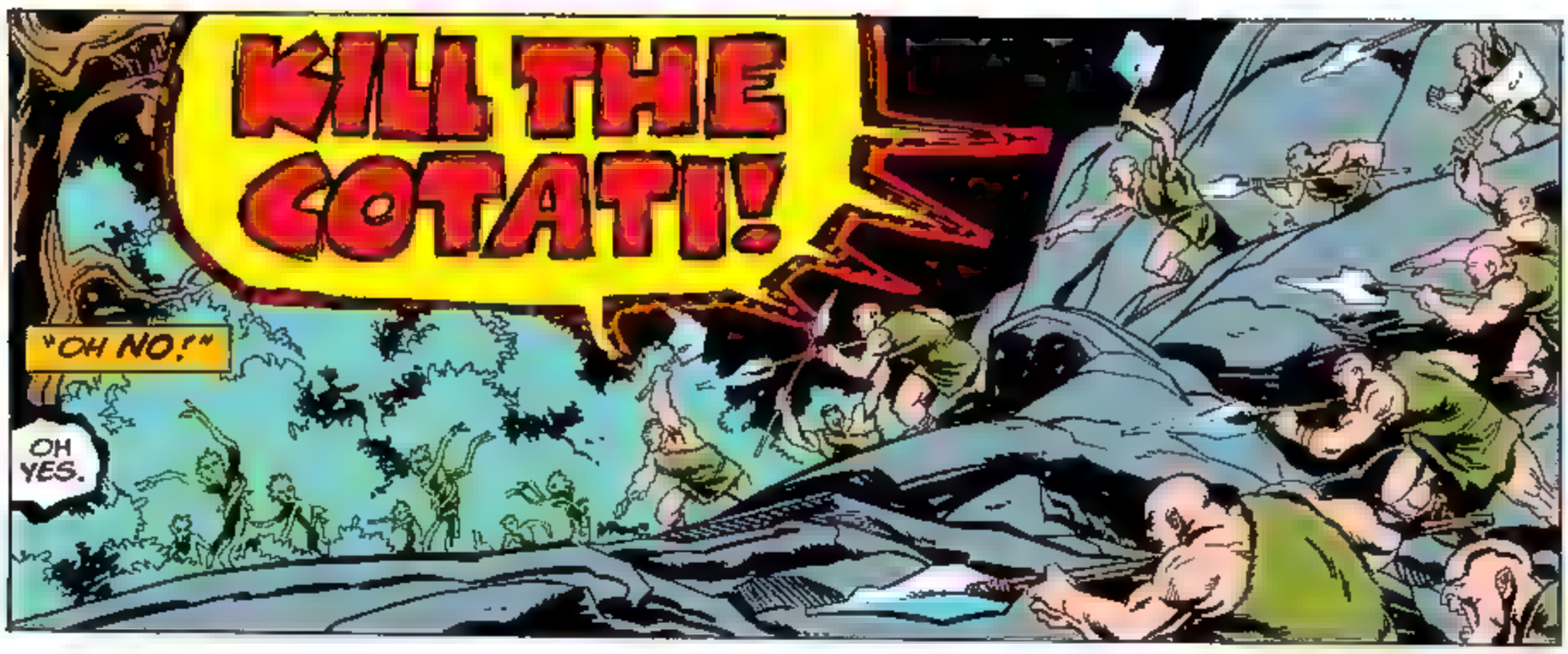
LOOK, THEN UPON THE BARREN MOON LEFT TO THE COTATI, AS IT WAS THE DAY THEY LANDED THERE.
"THEY DO NOT MOVE. WHERE THE KREE WENT SWIFTLY TO WORK, THESE BEINGS SEEM TO HAVE GONE TO SLEEP."
APPARENTLY, MANTIS -- APPARENTLY--


--YET SEE THE MOON AT THE END OF THE ALLOTTED ANNUM!
"BY MY TROTH! 'TIS A GARDEN -- A PARK!
YES! THE COTATI, RATHER THAN HEW THE FACE OF THE ROCK, HAVE CAUSED IT, INSTEAD, TO BE COVERED WITH LIMITLESS GROWTH.
THEY HAVE USED THEIR MENTAL POWERS TO SEARCH OUT ANCIENT SEEDS AND WATER BURIED DEEP IN THE PLANET'S CRUST, ALL IN THE PURSUIT OF BEAUTY.

FROM ALL INDICATIONS, MORAG, THE ACCURSED COTATI WILL BE CHOSEN THE VICTORS IN OUR CONTEST.
YOU MEAN, AFTER ALL OUR EFFORTS -- OUR WEEKS AND MONTHS OF STRUGGLE--

--A PARK COULD BE ADJUDGED MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN A CITY?
NO! IT CANNOT BE!
THE KREE WILL NOT BE LEFT BEHIND!

AND THAT NIGHT, UNDER A SABLE CLOAK OF DARKNESS--
--A DARKER DEED IS DONE!

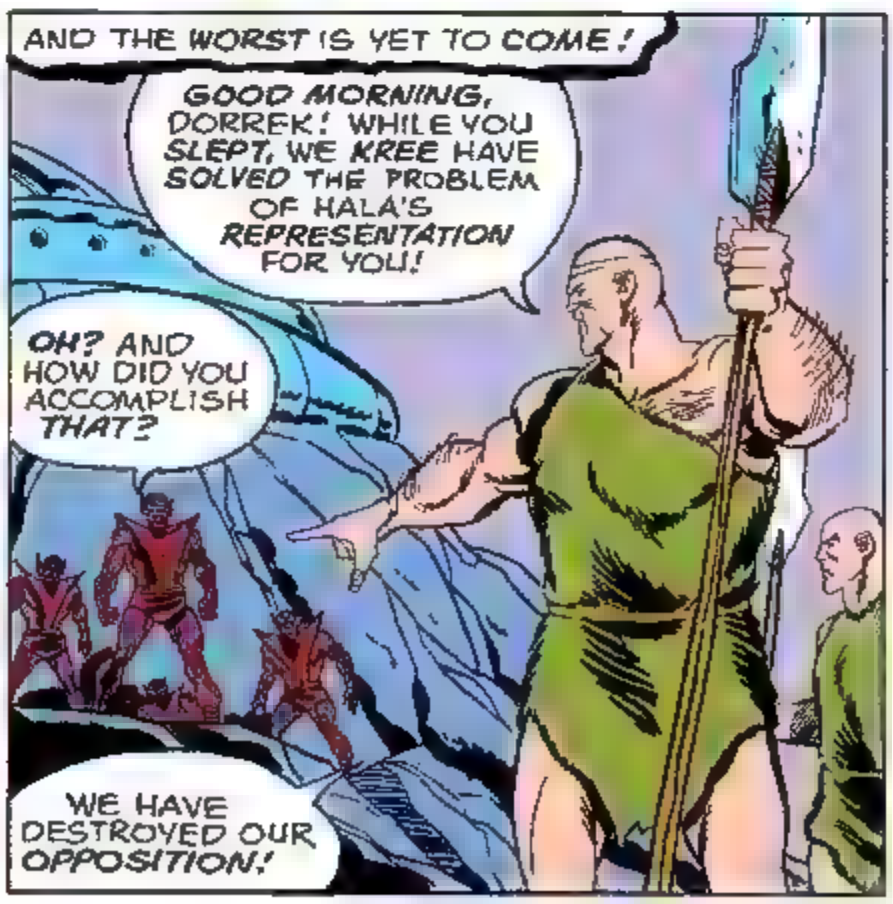

KILL THE COTATI!
"OH NO!"
OH YES.

KILL THEM!!

KILL THEM ALL!!

BY DAYBREAK, THERE IS NOT ONE OF THE PLANT-BEINGS LEFT ALIVE.
VICTORY IS OURS!

OH-MY-GOD!
AS THOR CAN TELL YOU, IRON MAN, GODS ARE AS HELPLESS AS ANY WHEN THE BLOOD-LUST SEIZES MORTALS.


AND THE WORST IS YET TO COME!
GOOD MORNING, DORREK! WHILE YOU SLEPT, WE KREE HAVE SOLVED THE PROBLEM OF HALA'S REPRESENTATION FOR YOU!
OH? AND HOW DID YOU ACCOMPLISH THAT?
WE HAVE DESTROYED OUR OPPOSITION!

YOU -- DID WHAT?
FOOLS! DID YOU BELIEVE THIS WOULD GAIN YOU OUR FAVOR? SKRULLS MAY DEAL WITH BARBARIANS, BUT WE DO NOT CONDONE BARBARISM!
NOW, HALA SHALL BE SHUT FOREVER FROM OUR CIRCLE OF FAVORED WORLDS!

YOU ARE THE FOOL, SKRULL -- FOR AFTER A YEAR OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY, WE DO NOT PROPOSE TO RETURN TO OUR FORMER IGNORANCE!
IF THAT IS YOUR DECISION--
-- THEN YOU HAVE LIKEWISE DECIDED TO DIE!
TAKE THEM!

THIS GUY'S CRAZY-- STARK, RAVING CRAZY!
I'LL NOT DEBATE IT WITH YOU, HAWKEYE -- BUT I WOULD ASK YOU ONE QUESTION:
IF WE HAD TRAVERSED THE HISTORY OF EARTH, WOULD IT DEMONSTRATE ANY MORE SANITY?

"BUT WHY DON'T THE SKRULLS DO ANY-THING? WHY DON'T THEY FIGHT BACK?"
"DO YOU NOT REMEMBER, ARCHER? THE SKRULLS ARE NOT NOW WARRIORS."

"NO -- AND BECAUSE OF IT THEY RE NOW CORPSES! SO MUCH FOR PACIFISM!"
"TO THIS ONE'S MIND, HAWKEYE, PACIFISM DOES NOT PRECLUDE SELF-DEFENSE.

"SHE GRIEVES THAT THE *SKRULLS* BELIEVED *OTHERWISE.*"

WE HAVE ACHIEVED A *TREMENDOUS TRIUMPH* TODAY, MY PEOPLE! WE HAVE OVERCOME THE MOST *IMPORTANT* PREY EVER *KNOWN* TO US--

--AND NOW, WE STAND AS *UNDISPUTED MASTERS* OF OUR *HOME WORLD,* WITH ALL THE SECRETS OF THE *SKRULL SHIP* OURS FOR THE *TAKING!*

WE MUST BEGIN *AGAIN,* AS WE DID ON THE *MOON,* TO *MASTER* WHAT IS NOW OURS--

--SO THAT *SOMEDAY* WE CAN DESTROY *ALL* THE KRAVEN SKRULLS, AND REIGN AS UNDISPUTED MASTERS OF THE *STARS!*

IT IS A *GREAT TASK,* FOR A *GREAT PEOPLE!*

ARE YOU *WITH ME?*

YES! *YES!*

THE SKRULLS *NEVER KNEW* WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEIR SHIP, UNTIL THE DAY, DECADES LATER, A *KREE ARMADA* ATTACKED THEIR WORLD WITHOUT *WARNING.*

ON THAT DAY, THEY BECAME AS *BLOOD-THIRSTY* AS THEIR *ENEMIES*-- AND THUS BEGAN THE ETERNAL *KREE-SKRULL WAR!*

THAT IS *FASCINATING,* STAFF--

--BUT WHAT HAS IT TO DO WITH *THIS ONE'S* PAST AND FUTURE?

IT HAS *EVERYTHING* TO DO WITH YOU, MANTIS. *CURB* YOUR IMPATIENCE.

ONE DOES NOT BECOME A CELESTIAL MADONNA *OVERNIGHT.*

AND ME WITHOUT MY *DRAMAMINE!*

PREPARE YOURSELVES! WE JOURNEY *ONWARD!*

NEXT ISSUE

THE SCARLET WITCH VERSUS MOONDRAGON

THE DEATH, RESURRECTION, DEATH, RESURRECTION AND DEATH OF THE HUMAN TORCH!

AND, JUST TO ROUND THINGS OUT-- THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE, PART II!

Whatever did happen to simple stories?

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
BEGINNING THE LONG-AWAITED ORIGIN OF THE VISION!
FOR THE HUMAN TORCH TO LIVE, THE AVENGERS MUST DIE!
SLAY THEM, ANDROID!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

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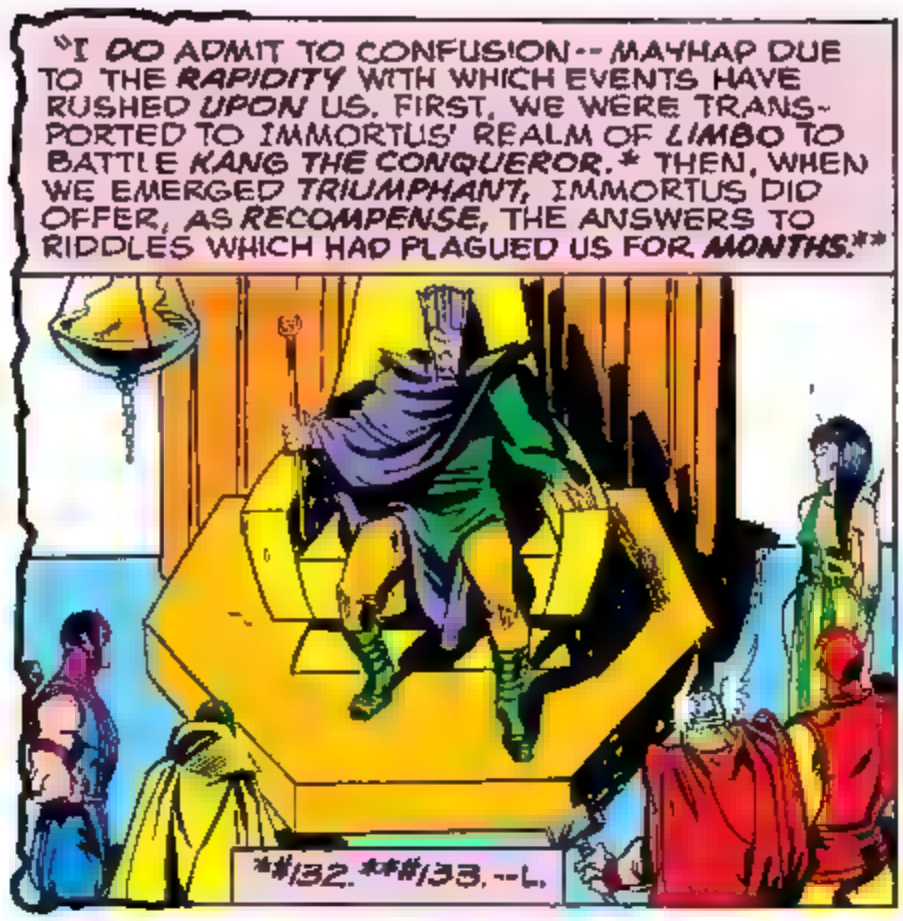
AYE, HAWKEYE-- THIS IS WHAT IMMORTUS DID PROMISE.
YET, THUS FAR, WE HAVE SEEN LITTLE, IF ANYTHING, RELATING TO THE WOMAN WE AVENGERS HAVE SWORN TO AID!


"I DO ADMIT TO CONFUSION -- MAYHAP DUE TO THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH EVENTS HAVE RUSHED UPON US. FIRST, WE WERE TRANSPORTED TO IMMORTUS' REALM OF LIMBO TO BATTLE KANG THE CONQUEROR.* THEN, WHEN WE EMERGED TRIUMPHANT, IMMORTUS DID OFFER, AS RECOMPENSE, THE ANSWERS TO RIDDLES WHICH HAD PLAGUED US FOR MONTHS.**
*#132. **#133. --L.

"AS THE SELF-PROCLAIMED MASTER OF TIME, IT WAS A SIMPLE TASK FOR HIM --

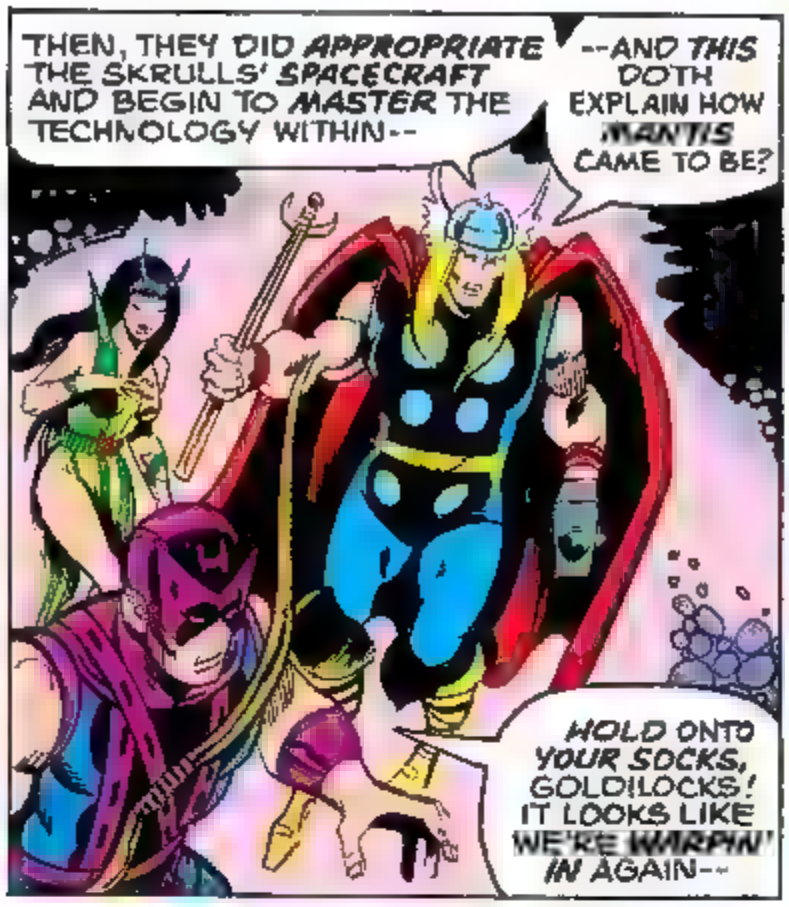
"--TO DISPATCH THE VISION INTO HIS PAST AS THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH --*
*AND DON'T WORRY, SYNTHOPHILE -- JUST LIKE WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS, WE'LL COVER THAT ONE, TOO! -- LEN.

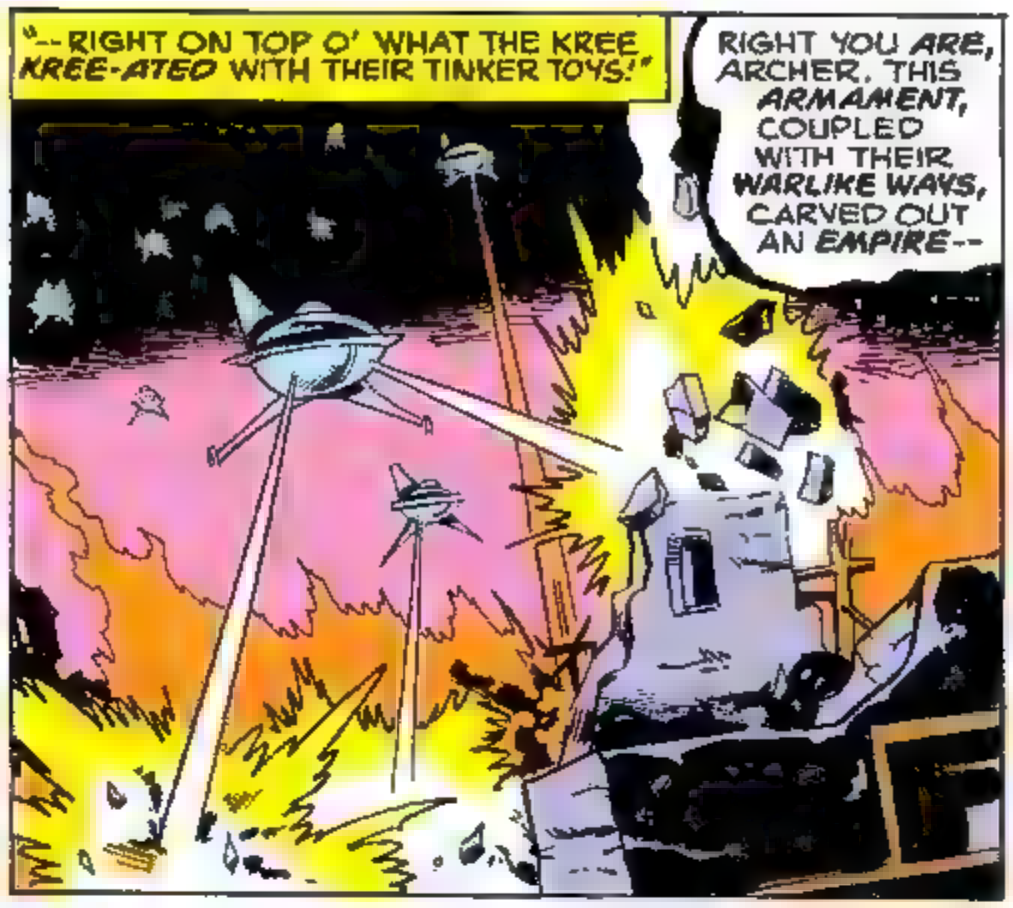
"--JUST AS HE DID SEND US UPON THIS VOYAGE OF YEARS AND LIGHT-YEARS.
"SINCE THAT MOMENT, WE HAVE INVISIBLY OBSERVED THE EARLIEST DAYS OF TWO ALIEN RACES -- THE HUMANOID KREE AND THE SENTIENT PLANTS WITH WHICH THEY DID SHARE THEIR PLANET, THE COTATI.

"THEY WERE PRIMITIVE PEOPLES, 'TIL THE SCIENTIFICALLY-ADVANCED SKRULLS CAME TO THEM, OFFERING TO TRADE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE WORLD'S RESOURCES.
"ALL THE SKRULLS DID REQUIRE WAS A CONTEST, TO DETERMINE WHICH RACE SHOULD REPRESENT THE PLANET

"THE CONTEST WAS AN HONEST ONE -- BUT NOT SO THE KREE. FACED, AT ITS END, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF DEFEAT --
"--THEY DESTROYED THEIR RIVALS --

"--AND WHEN THE SKRULLS OBJECTED, THE KREE DESTROYED THEIR PARTY AS WELL!"

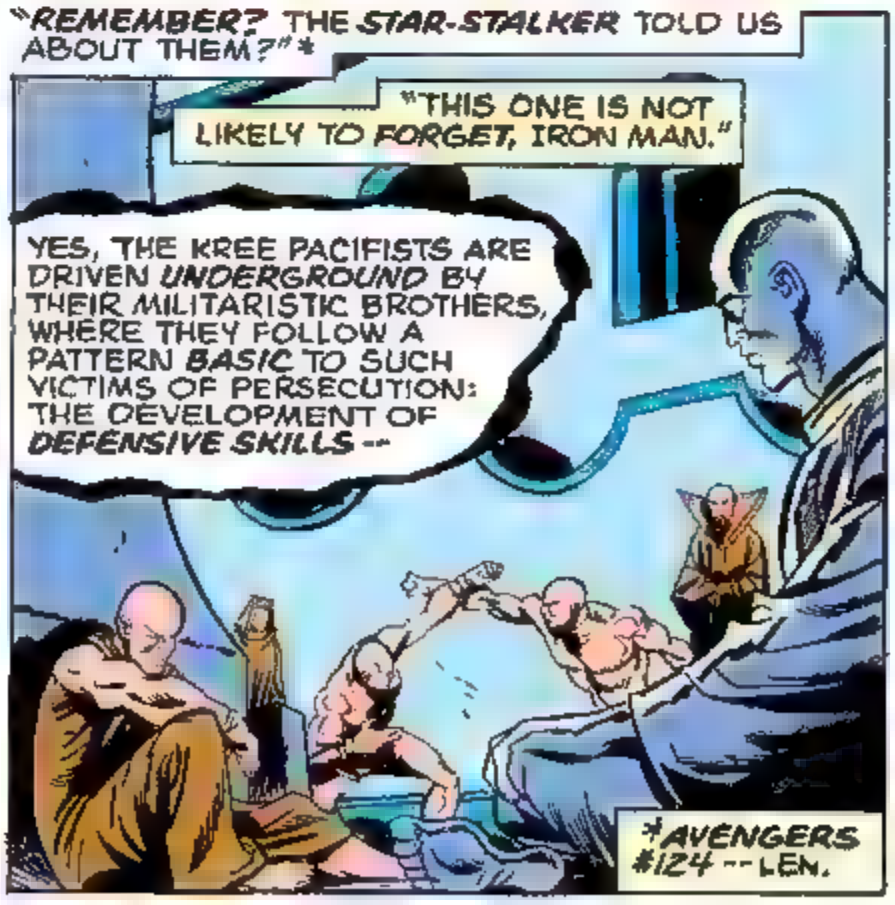

THEN, THEY DID APPROPRIATE THE SKRULLS' SPACECRAFT AND BEGIN TO MASTER THE TECHNOLOGY WITHIN--
--AND THIS DOTH EXPLAIN HOW MANTIS CAME TO BE?
HOLD ONTO YOUR SOCKS, GOLDILOCKS! IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE WARPIN' IN AGAIN--


"--RIGHT ON TOP O' WHAT THE KREE KREE-ATED WITH THEIR TINKER TOYS!"
RIGHT YOU ARE, ARCHER. THIS ARMAMENT, COUPLED WITH THEIR WARLIKE WAYS, CARVED OUT AN EMPIRE--

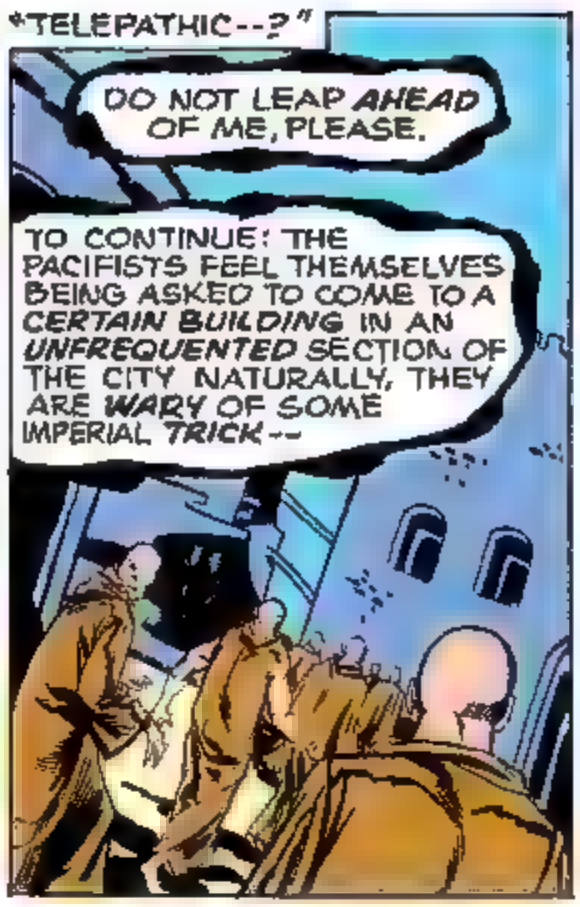
--WHICH SET THE PRE-EXISTING SKRULLIAN FEDERATION AT THEIR THROATS FROM THAT DAY TO THIS!
ACROSS A THOUSAND THOUSAND WORLDS THEY'VE BATTLED, WITH NEVER A CLEAR-CUT VICTOR--

--AND, CONVERSELY, WITHOUT A CLEAR-CUT LOSER, SO THAT EACH SIDE HAS PROSPERED AND, IF ANYTHING, GROWN STRONGER.
WE ARE NOW IN THE KREE YEAR 476, WHEN THE BLUE MEN HAVE SCALED THE HEIGHTS--

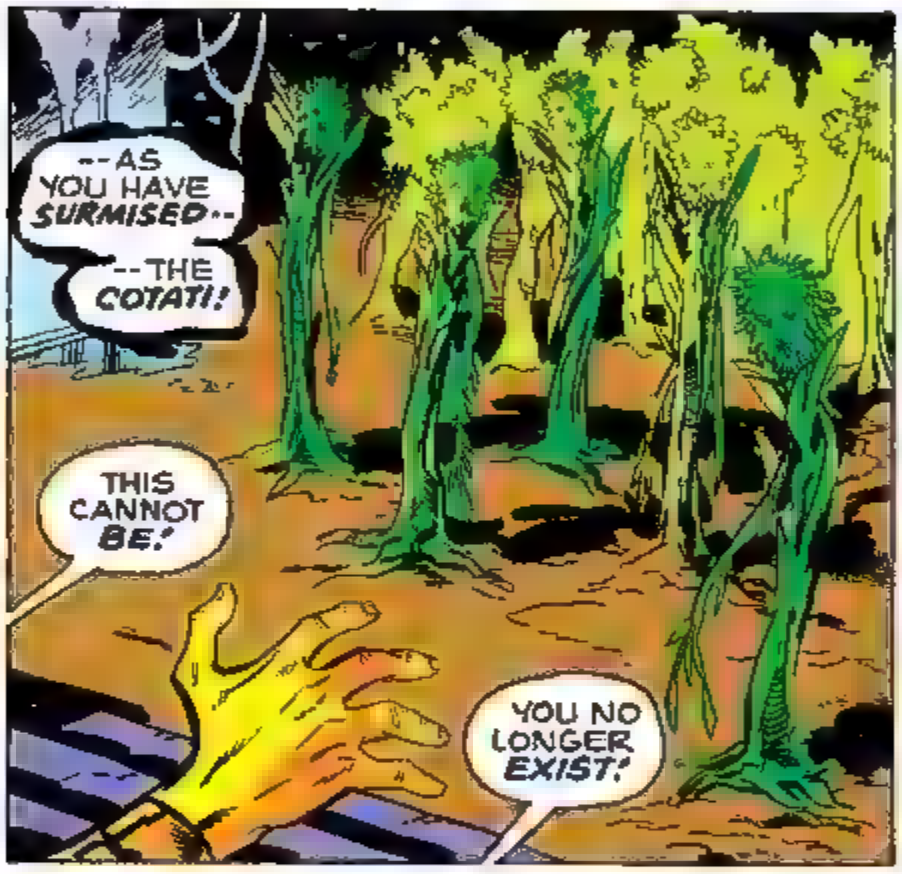
--FROM WHICH THEY LOOK DOWN UPON ANY WHO OPPOSE THEM WITH LORDLY CONTEMPT. THIS INCLUDES ANY OF THEIR OWN KIND WHO DARE TO DECRY THE ALL-PERVASIVE POWER-HUNGER THAT DRIVES THEM.
"THE PACIFIST KREE!


"REMEMBER? THE STAR-STALKER TOLD US ABOUT THEM?"*
"THIS ONE IS NOT LIKELY TO FORGET, IRON MAN."
YES, THE KREE PACIFISTS ARE DRIVEN UNDERGROUND BY THEIR MILITARISTIC BROTHERS, WHERE THEY FOLLOW A PATTERN BASIC TO SUCH VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENSIVE SKILLS --
*AVENGERS #124 -- LEN.

--AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR MINDS. DECADES PASS, HERE IN THE SLUMS OF THE KREE CAPITAL CITY--
--UNTIL, ONE DAY--
--THEIR MEDITATIONS ARE SHATTERED BY AN INSISTENT, TELEPATHIC CONTACT!

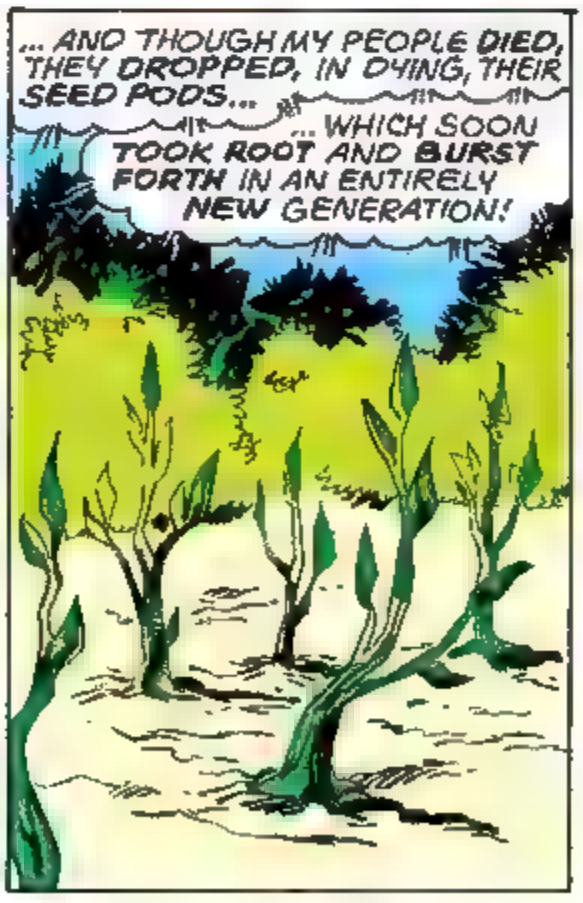

"TELEPATHIC--?"
DO NOT LEAP AHEAD OF ME, PLEASE.
TO CONTINUE: THE PACIFISTS FEEL THEMSELVES BEING ASKED TO COME TO A CERTAIN BUILDING IN AN UNFREQUENTED SECTION OF THE CITY. NATURALLY, THEY ARE WARY OF SOME IMPERIAL TRICK--

--BUT THEY SIMPLY CANNOT IGNORE THE STRANGE CALL.
THUS, THEY ENTER THE DANK STRUCTURE, AND FIND--

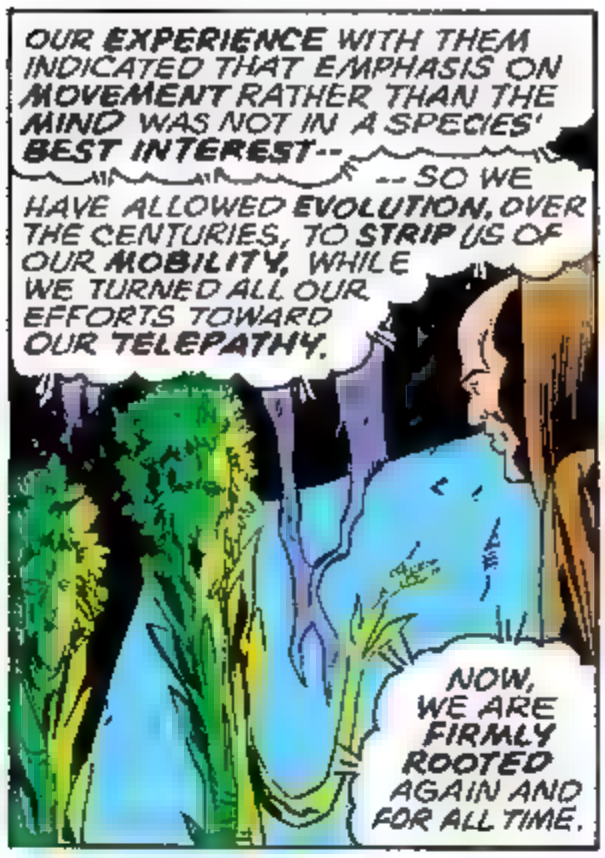

--AS YOU HAVE SURMISED--
--THE COTATI!
THIS CANNOT BE!
YOU NO LONGER EXIST!

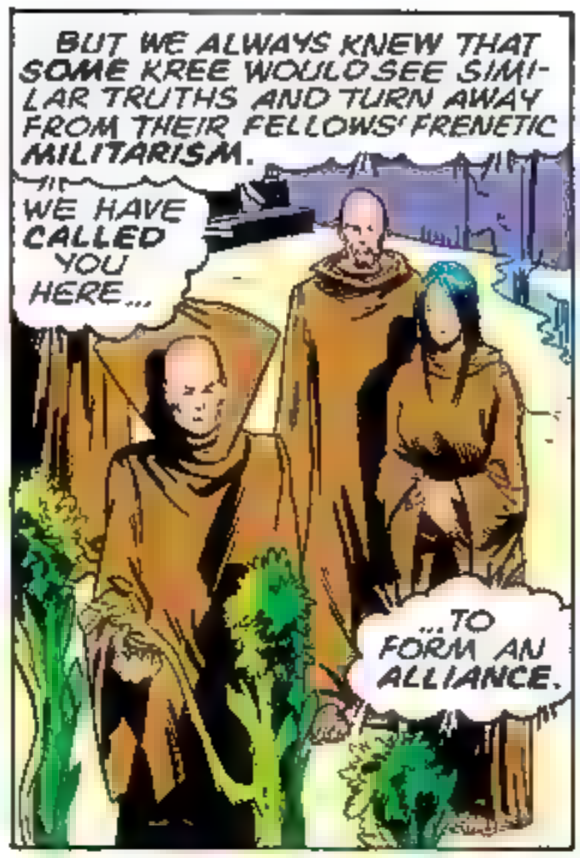
THEN, EITHER YOU ARE MAD, OR YOU ARE WRONG, HUMAN. I ASSURE YOU, IT IS THE LATTER.
"MORE TELEPATHY!"
WE DO EXIST. HARKEN....

OUR ANCESTORS WERE ANNIHILATED BY YOURS... YET THAT DID NOT TERMINATE THE COTATI.
PLANT LIFE DIFFERS GREATLY FROM ANIMAL LIFE...


... AND THOUGH MY PEOPLE DIED, THEY DROPPED, IN DYING, THEIR SEED PODS...
... WHICH SOON TOOK ROOT AND BURST FORTH IN AN ENTIRELY NEW GENERATION!

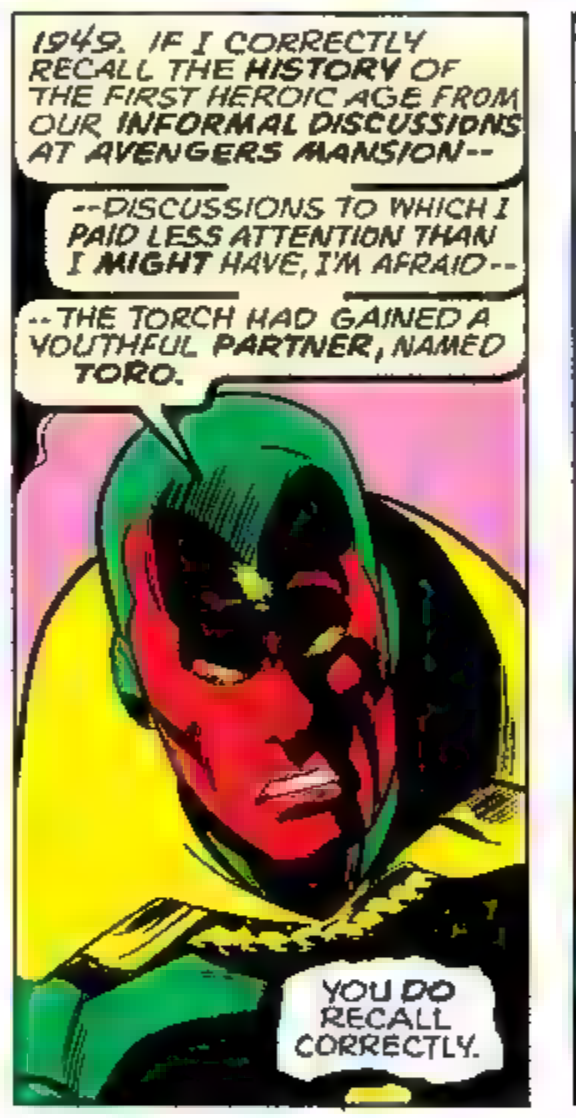
WHILE THE KREE STUDIED THE SKRULLIAN SHIP'S TREASURES, THESE SEEDLINGS GREW UNNOTICED. IN TIME, THEY REACHED MATURITY AND STEPPED FROM THE SOIL...
... TO PROPEL THEMSELVES TOWARD MORE COMPLETE CONCEALMENT, WHERE OUR PEOPLE HAVE REMAINED EVER SINCE, UNBEKNOWNST TO THE MURDERERS.


OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THEM INDICATED THAT EMPHASIS ON MOVEMENT RATHER THAN THE MIND WAS NOT IN A SPECIES' BEST INTEREST--
--SO WE HAVE ALLOWED EVOLUTION, OVER THE CENTURIES, TO STRIP US OF OUR MOBILITY, WHILE WE TURNED ALL OUR EFFORTS TOWARD OUR TELEPATHY.
NOW, WE ARE FIRMLY ROOTED AGAIN AND FOR ALL TIME.

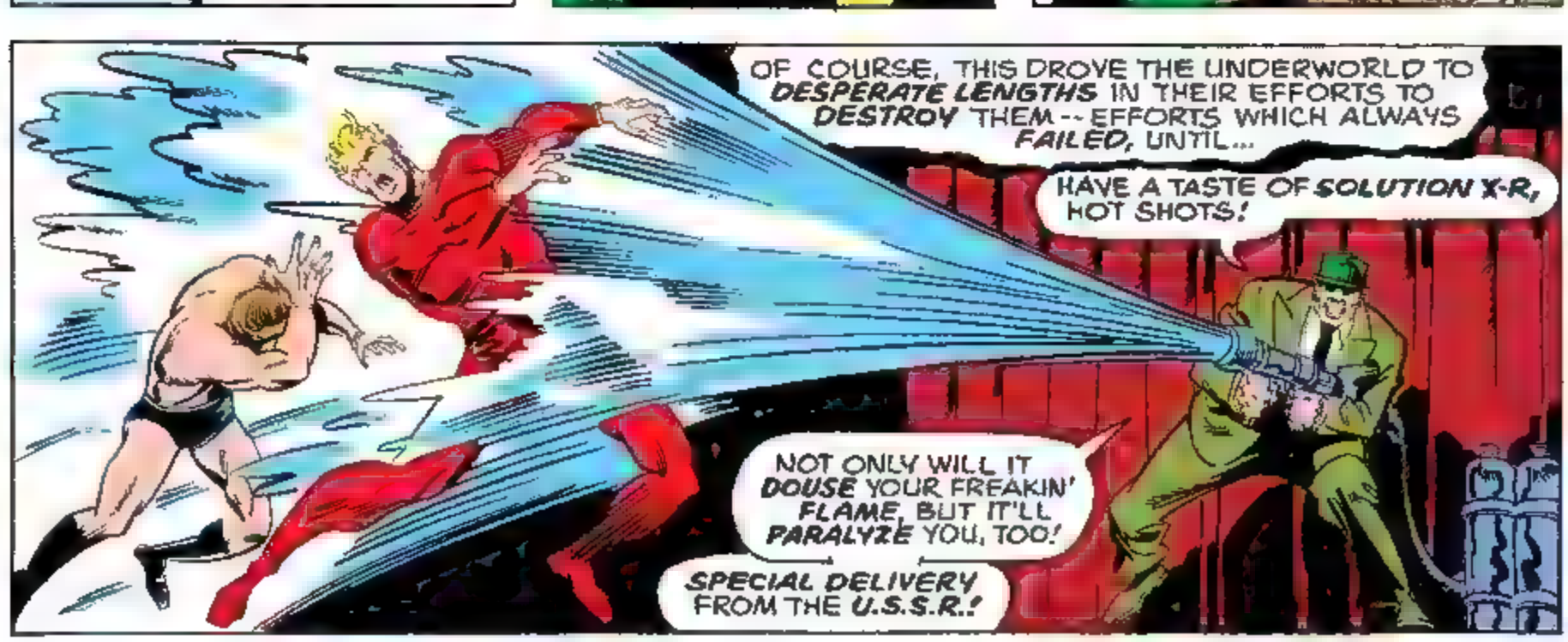

BUT WE ALWAYS KNEW THAT SOME KREE WOULD SEE SIMILAR TRUTHS AND TURN AWAY FROM THEIR FELLOWS' FRENETIC MILITARISM.
WE HAVE CALLED YOU HERE...
...TO FORM AN ALLIANCE.

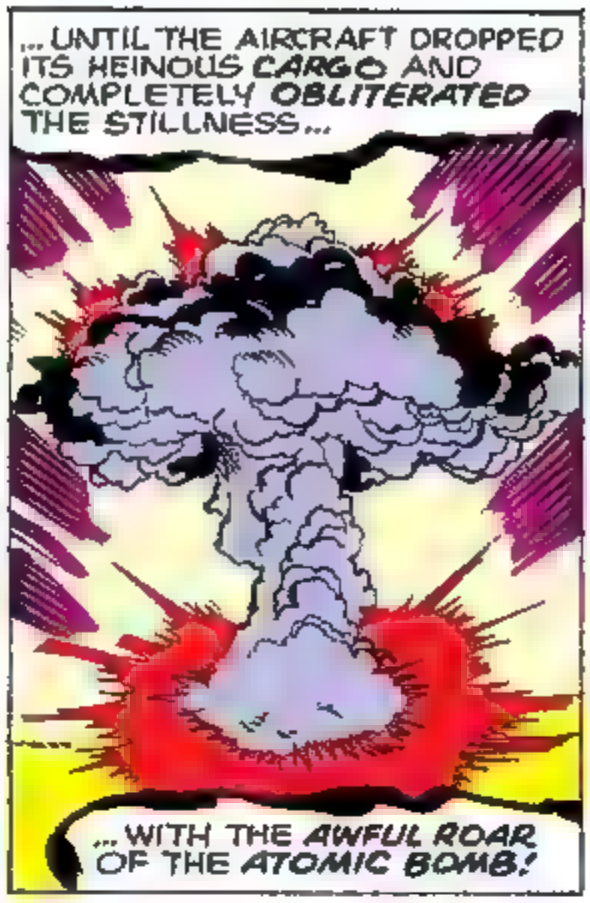
THE COTATI NEED THE CARE THEY CANNOT PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES, AND THE PACIFISTS WISH TO LEARN THE PLANTS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE MIND.
IT WILL PROVE A MOST REMARKABLE ASSOCIATION.
I'LL BET!

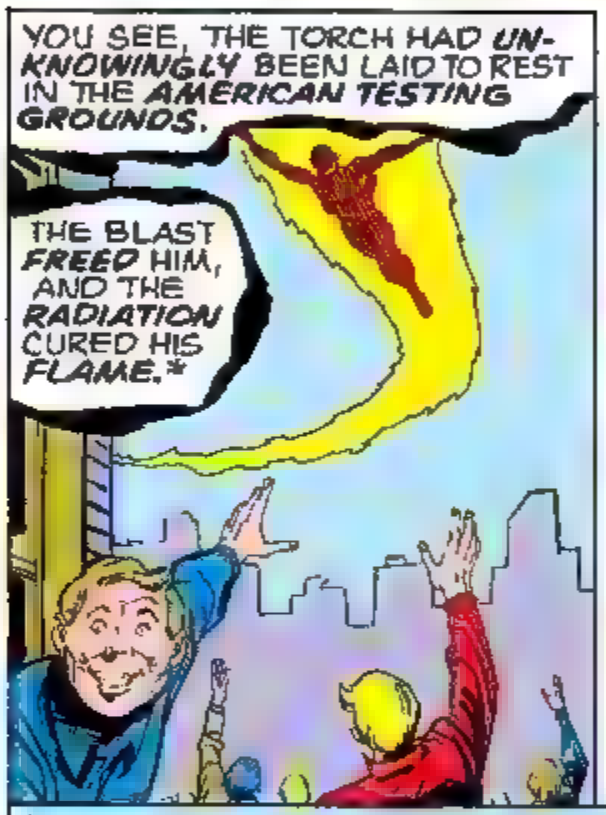
MEANWHILE, IN A SEPARATE QUADRANT OF THE CONTINUUM--AS PROMISED--
THE ORIGIN OF THE VISION!
PART II!
VISION, YOU HAVE WITNESSED THE ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN TORCH IN 1939.
NOW YOU SHALL SEE THE NEXT MAJOR STEPS IN THE ODYSSEY OF YOUR ANDROID BODY--IN THE YEAR 1949


1949. IF I CORRECTLY RECALL THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST HEROIC AGE FROM OUR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AT AVENGERS MANSION--
--DISCUSSIONS TO WHICH I PAID LESS ATTENTION THAN I MIGHT HAVE, I'M AFRAID--
--THE TORCH HAD GAINED A YOUTHFUL PARTNER, NAMED TORO.
YOU DO RECALL CORRECTLY.

IN 1949, THE TORCH AND TORO WERE AT THE HEIGHT OF THEIR CRIME-FIGHTING CAREERS.
RUN, BOSS! BULLETS DON'T STOP 'EM!


OF COURSE, THIS DROVE THE UNDERWORLD TO DESPERATE LENGTHS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DESTROY THEM--EFFORTS WHICH ALWAYS FAILED, UNTIL...
HAVE A TASTE OF SOLUTION X-R, HOT SHOTS!
NOT ONLY WILL IT DOUSE YOUR FREAKIN' FLAME, BUT IT'LL PARALYZE YOU, TOO!
SPECIAL DELIVERY FROM THE U.S.S.R.!





*THE FULL STORY WAS IN YOUNG MEN #24. --L.

*SEE SUB-MARINER #14.-L.

MEANWHILE...
ONWARD AND ONWARD WE JOURNEY, YET THIS ONE ONLY BECOMES MORE CONFUSED! FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE FEELS EMPATHY TO BE MORE A CURSE THAN A BLESSING!
SO MANY SENSATIONS ASSAIL HER AS WE PASS THROUGH TIME, IN ADDITION TO ALL THE FACTS--!
RELAX, LADY. YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T GO FOR FRIVOLITY--
--BUT IT'S BETTER'N FLIPPIN' OUT!

"PERHAPS YOU ARE CORRECT, HAWKEYE. ONLY--THERE IS SUCH OVERWHELMING HATRED IN THE KREE EMPIRE!"
A CENTURY HAS GONE, AND NOW THE PACIFISTS HAVE DEVELOPED THEIR SENTIMENT INTO PHILOSOPHY--
--A PHILOSOPHY DESPISED AND RIDICULED BY THEIR SOCIETY!

THEY ARE PRIESTS NOW--STILL OBLIGED TO ABIDE IN THE POORER QUARTER OF THE CITY, BUT WITH A TEMPLE RATHER THAN A TENEMENT TO SURROUND THEM.
THEIR NEW BUILDING WAS DESIGNED WITH THE UTMOST PRECISION--FOR IT CONTAINS A SECOND CELLAR, IN WHICH THE COTATI LIVE, AND OF WHICH THE WARLORDS KNOW NOTHING.

STILL, EVEN WITHOUT THAT BIT OF EVIDENCE, THE MILITARY REQUIRES LITTLE EXCUSE TO THREATEN THEIR WELL-BEING--
--AS THEY DISCOVER NIGHTS LATER!
OPEN UP, PRIESTS! WE CITIZENS HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR RABBLE-ROUSING!
THESE ARE NO CITIZENS! I RECOGNIZE THEIR LEADER!

HE'S A CAPTAIN IN THE SECURITY SQUADRON--WITHOUT HIS UNIFORM!
THEY'RE ALL SOLDIERS--FIRING WITHOUT PROVOCATION!
DEFEND YOURSELVES, BROTHERS AND SISTERS!
THEY DO, AND WELL...

...BUT THOUGH THEY SURVIVE THAT *BATTLE*, THEY LOSE THE *WAR*. ONE MAN'S *DEFENSE* IS ANOTHER MAN'S *ATTACK*, AND THE *SUPREME INTELLIGENCE*--

--THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE *MIGHTIEST MINDS* IN KREE *HISTORY*, AND *RULER* OF THE EMPIRE--

--GAINS HIS CHANCE TO ORDER THEIR *EXILE!*

YOU KNOW, THE LONGER I *LIVE*, THE *SORRIER* I BECOME FOR ALL THE *MILITARY* CONTRACTS STARK INDUSTRIES TOOK IN ITS TIME.

FAREWELL, FRIENDS. AT LEAST, THE MILITARY *REMAINS* IGNORANT OF *YOUR* EXISTANCE, AND THE *IRRIGATION SYSTEM* WE DEVISED WILL MAINTAIN YOUR LIVES...

...BUT...

SAY NO MORE, FRIEND. *GO* WITH THEM...

...BUT EVEN AS YOU HAVE AIDED *US* FOR THE MANY YEARS, SO SHALL *WE* FIND A WAY TO AID *YOU* NOW!

THE TELEPATHIC VOICE *RESOUNDS* IN EACH PRIEST'S SENSITIVE MIND AS THEY ARE TAKEN FROM THE HOMEWORLD...

...THOUGH THEY MAY *BE PARDONED* A CERTAIN SINKING SENSE OF *DISBELIEF*, WHICH ONLY *GROWS* AS THEY FILE ONTO THEIR DARK, BARREN *PRISON PLANET*.

THEY KNOW, *TOO WELL*, THE *CRUELTY* AND *POWER* OF THEIR OPPRESSERS.

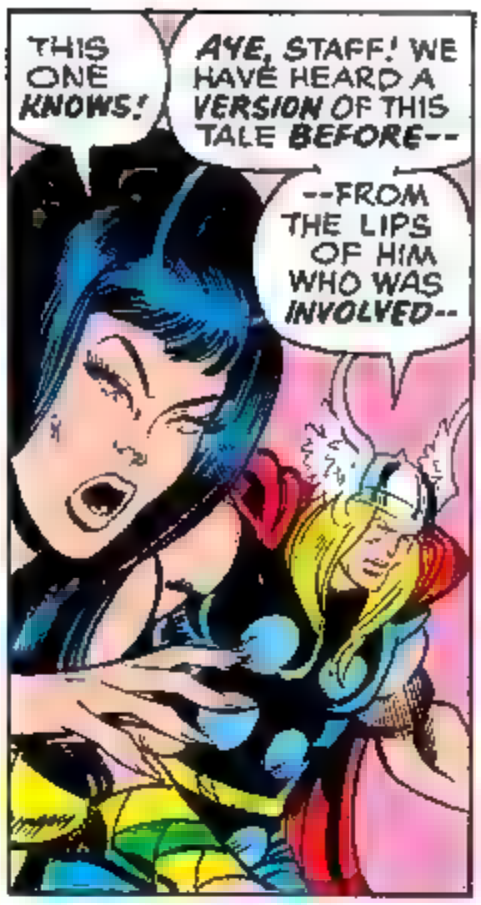
NOW, YOU SPINELESS SCUM, YOU'LL HAVE *YOUR* CHANCE TO SURVIVE, JUST AS OUR *ANCESTORS* DID, ON *EARTH'S MOON!*

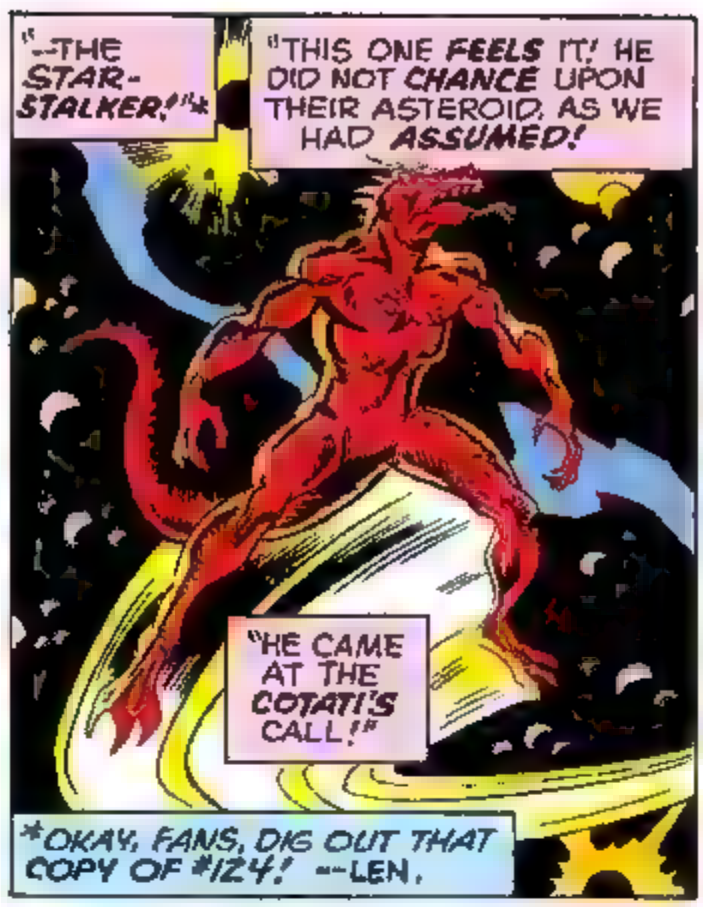
MAYBE THEY'LL START THEIR *OWN* EMPIRE, YON-BURR! THE *SCUM EMPIRE!* *HA HA!*

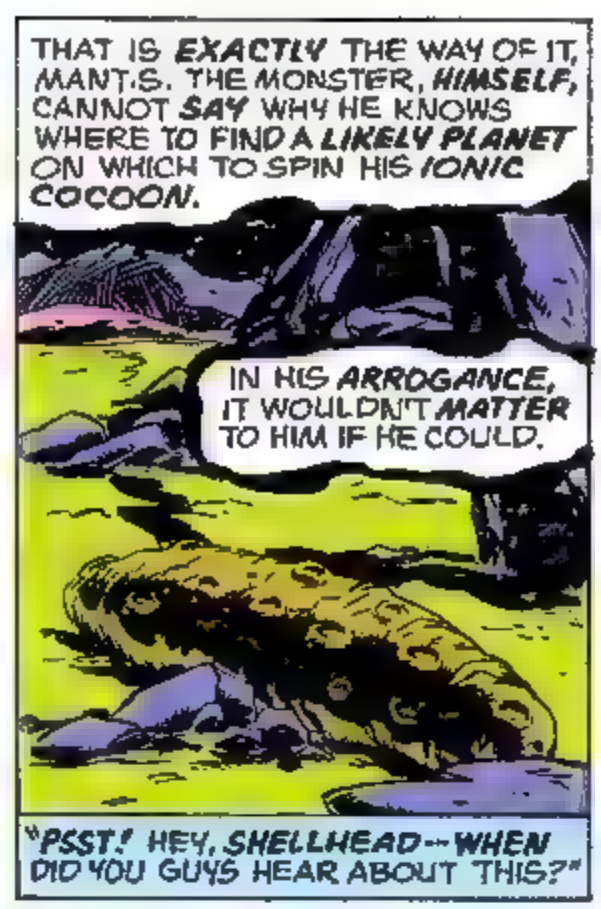
THE SOLDIERS' JEERS SEEM TO *LINGER*, EVEN AFTER THEY VANISH INTO THE VOID.

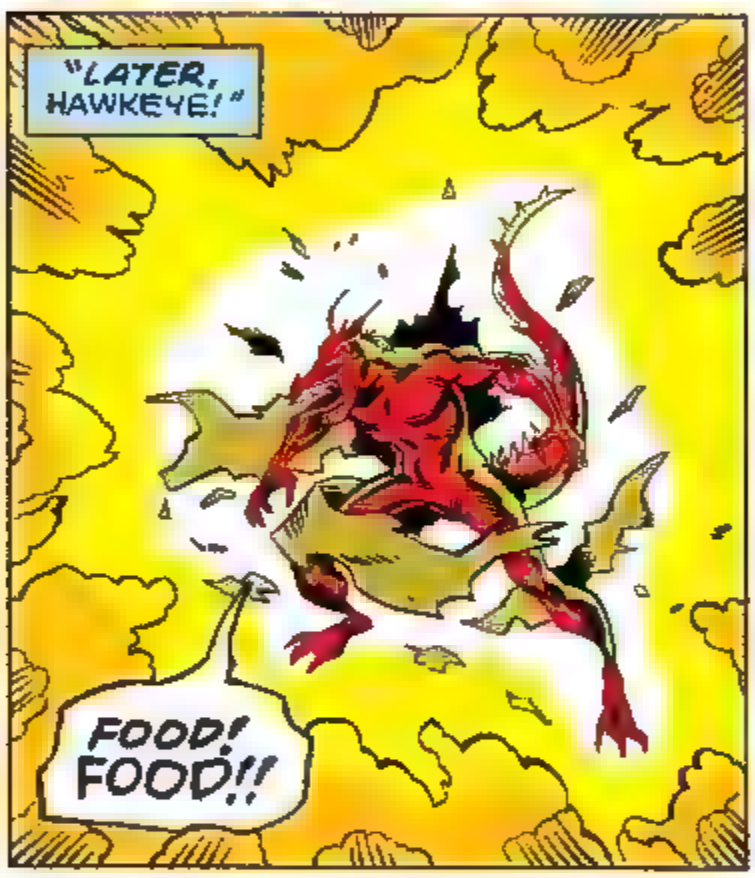
HOW CAN THESE *TYRANTS* BE *OVERCOME*...

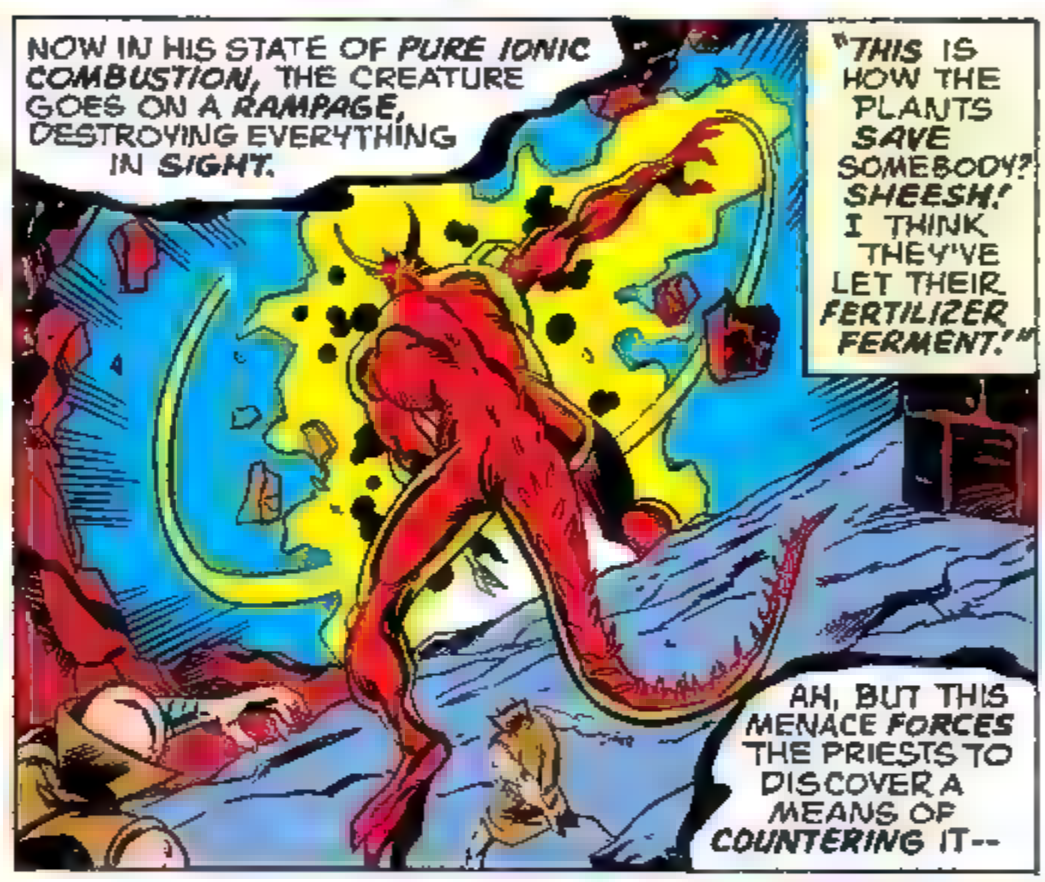
...BY *IMMOBILE*, AND NOW *COMPLETELY EVOLVED, PLANTS*... HALF A *GALAXY* AWAY?


THIS ONE KNOWS!
AYE, STAFF! WE HAVE HEARD A VERSION OF THIS TALE BEFORE--
--FROM THE LIPS OF HIM WHO WAS INVOLVED--

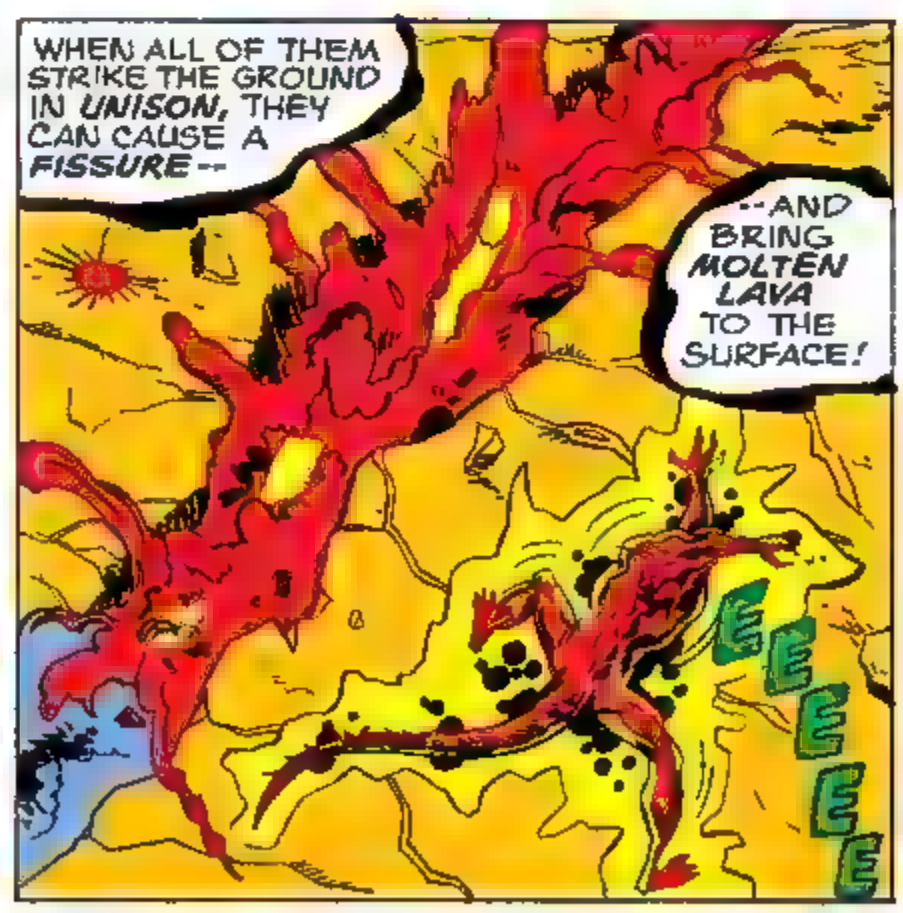

"--THE STAR-STALKER!"*
"THIS ONE FEELS IT! HE DID NOT CHANCE UPON THEIR ASTEROID, AS WE HAD ASSUMED!
"HE CAME AT THE COTATI'S CALL!"
*OKAY, FANS, DIG OUT THAT COPY OF #124! --LEN.

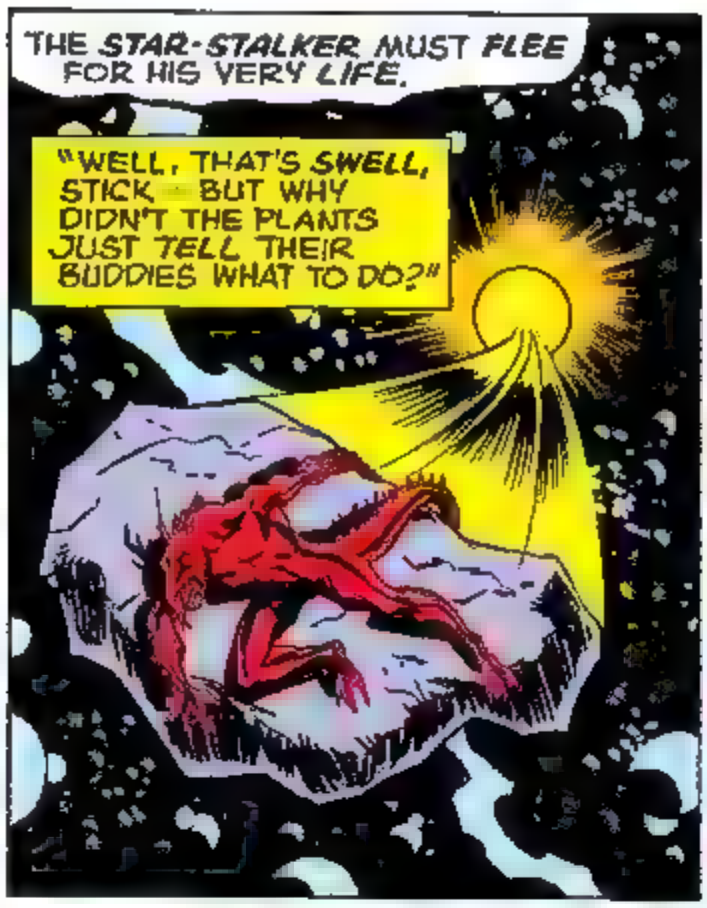

THAT IS EXACTLY THE WAY OF IT, MANTIS. THE MONSTER, HIMSELF, CANNOT SAY WHY HE KNOWS WHERE TO FIND A LIKELY PLANET ON WHICH TO SPIN HIS IONIC COCOON.
IN HIS ARROGANCE, IT WOULDN'T MATTER TO HIM IF HE COULD.
"PSST! HEY, SHELLHEAD--WHEN DID YOU GUYS HEAR ABOUT THIS?"


"LATER, HAWKEYE!"
FOOD! FOOD!!


NOW IN HIS STATE OF PURE IONIC COMBUSTION, THE CREATURE GOES ON A RAMPAGE, DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT.
"THIS IS HOW THE PLANTS SAVE SOMEBODY? SHEESH! I THINK THEY'VE LET THEIR FERTILIZER FERMENT!"
AH, BUT THIS MENACE FORCES THE PRIESTS TO DISCOVER A MEANS OF COUNTERING IT--

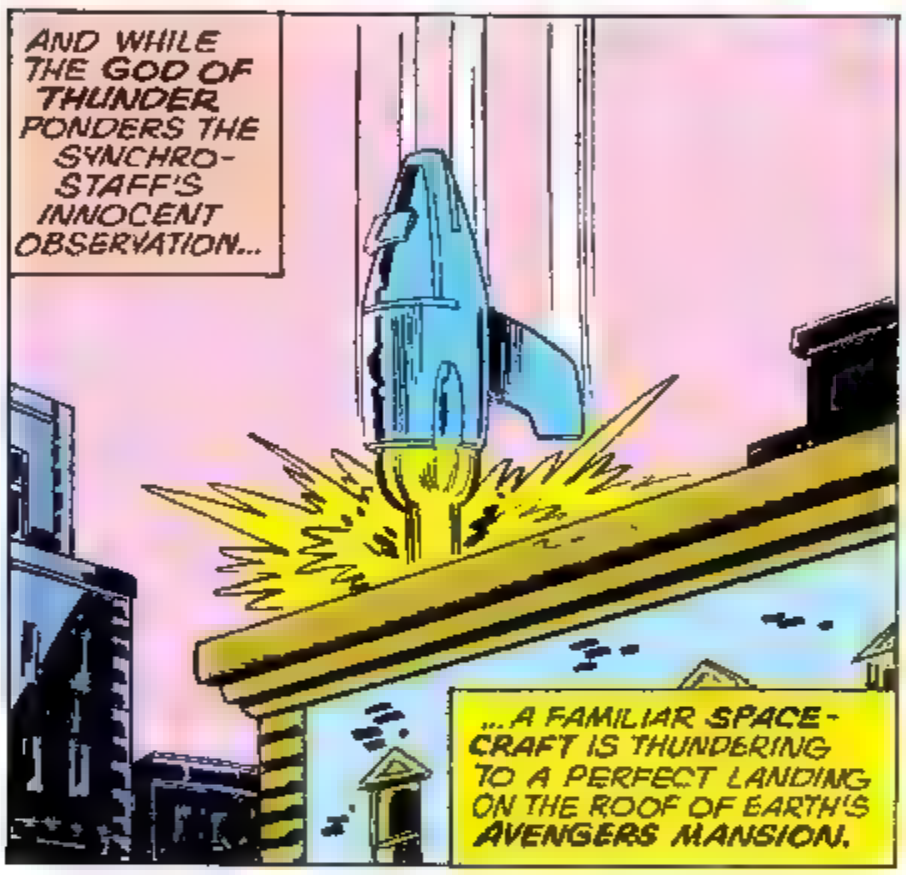
--A MEANS THAT THE COTATI ARE CONFIDENT THEY ARE CLEVER ENOUGH TO SEE-- AND THAT THEY AND THEY ALONE WILL HAVE FOR THE FUTURE.
THE PRIESTS KNOW THEIR PRISON LACKS VEGETATION, MINERALS, SUNLIGHT, AND HEAT--
--AND THEY CAN SUMMON UP ONLY ONE OF THOSE THINGS!


WHEN ALL OF THEM STRIKE THE GROUND IN UNISON, THEY CAN CAUSE A FISSURE--
--AND BRING MOLTEN LAVA TO THE SURFACE!
EEEEE

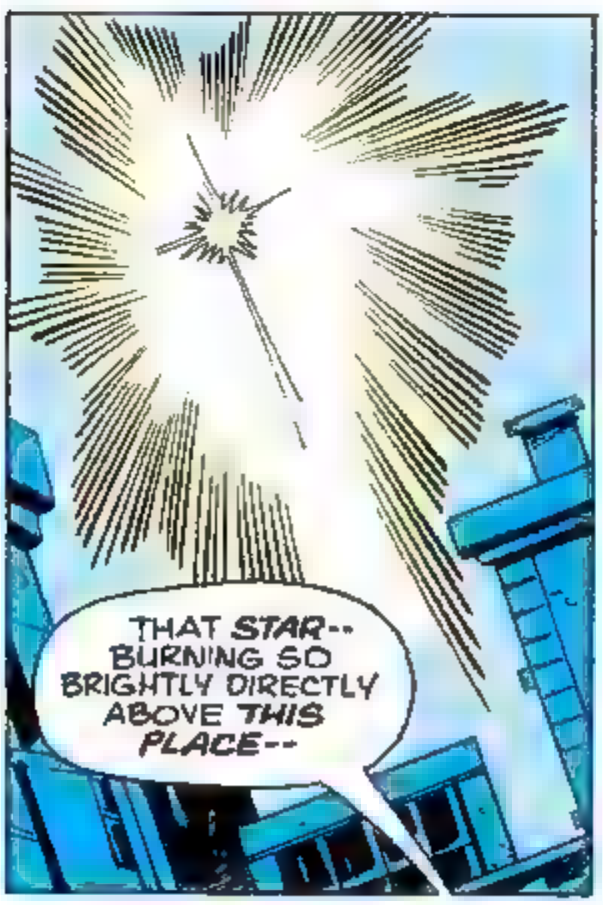

THE STAR-STALKER MUST FLEE FOR HIS VERY LIFE.
"WELL, THAT'S SWELL, STICK -- BUT WHY DIDN'T THE PLANTS JUST TELL THEIR BUDDIES WHAT TO DO?"

THEY WERE PREPARED TO DO SO, IF THE NEED AROSE -- YET, AS YOUR ADVENTURES WITH IMMORTUS AND RAMA-TUT SHOULD HAVE TAUGHT YOU --
--IT IS BETTER FOR MEN TO FIND THEIR OWN WAY. NO MAN WISHES TO FEEL HIMSELF A PUPPET, EVEN IN THE HANDS OF FRIENDS.

MEN MAY WORSHIP GODS -- BUT THEY FEAR THEM AS WELL.


AND WHILE THE GOD OF THUNDER PONDERS THE SYNCHRO-STAFF'S INNOCENT OBSERVATION...
...A FAMILIAR SPACE-CRAFT IS THUNDERING TO A PERFECT LANDING ON THE ROOF OF EARTH'S AVENGERS MANSION.

THEN, FROM WITHIN STEPS THE PRIESTESS OF TITAN CALLED... MOONDRAGON.*
IT IS WELL THAT I LEARNED TO SILENCE THE AVENGERS' ALARMS MENTALLY DURING MY PREVIOUS VISIT--- **
BY KRONOS! WHAT IS-- THAT?
*SEE LAST ISH **CAPT. MARVEL #31. -- L.


THAT STAR-- BURNING SO BRIGHTLY DIRECTLY ABOVE THIS PLACE--

-- IT WAS NOT VISIBLE AS I APPROACHED FROM SPACE!
I DID RIGHT TO COME HERE!

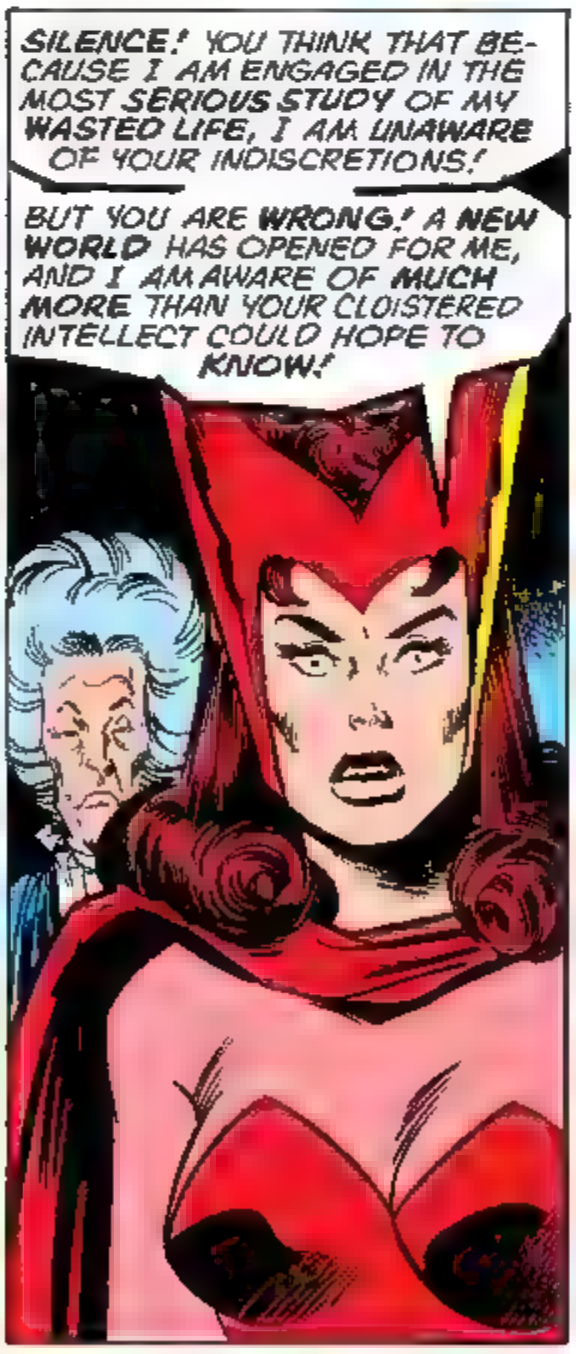
SWIFTLY, SHE STRIDES TO THE ELEVATOR AND WILLS IT TO CARRY HER INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE DWELLING. WITHOUT A BUTTON BEING PUSHED, IT DOES.
WHY -- MS. MOONDRAGON!
IT PLEASES ME TO GREET YOU AGAIN, JARVIS.

I HAVE COME IN RESPONSE TO THE AVENGERS' RADIO SUMMONS OF MAR-VELL, THOUGH I HAVE YET TO UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVATION WHICH LED ME TO DO SO.
MAY I SPEAK WITH THEM, PLEASE?
THEY ARE NOT HERE, MOONDRAGON. THEY FLEW TO VIET NAM.
LET ME CONTACT THEM THERE FOR YOU.

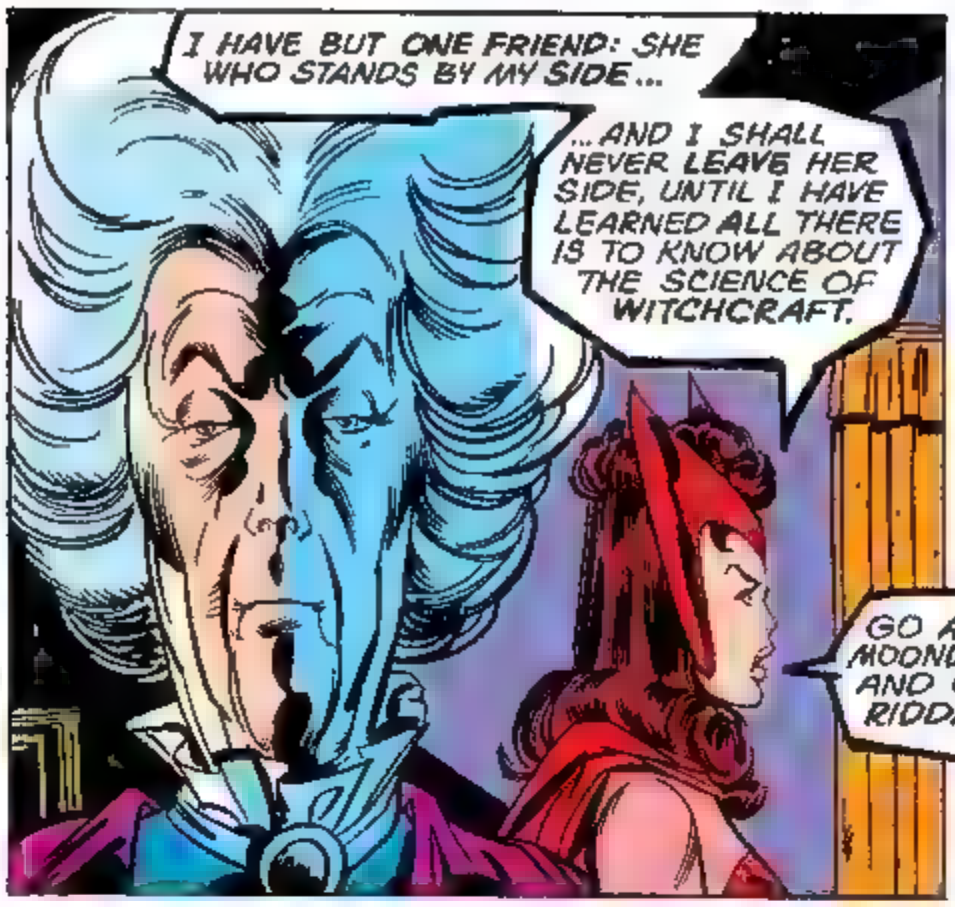
BUT... OF COURSE... LOOKING FOR THE ASSEMBLERS ANYWHERE ON EARTH RIGHT NOW IS A FRUITLESS ENDEAVOR.
THIS IS ALL VERY ODD.
MASTER HAWKEYE HAS BEEN QUITE INTENT UPON FINDING THE KREE CAPTAIN.

I DON'T LIKE IT. THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY UNEXPLAINED OCCURANCES INVOLVING THE AVENGERS OF LATE.
I WISH...
I WISH MS. WANDA WOULD CONSENT TO LEAVE MISS HARKNESS' ROOM, SO SHE COULD HELP.

TELLING TALES OUT OF SCHOOL, JARVIS?
BUTLERS HAVE BEEN FIRED--AND WORSE--FOR MUCH LESS!
WHO--?
MS.--MS. WANDA!
I DID NOT INTEND---

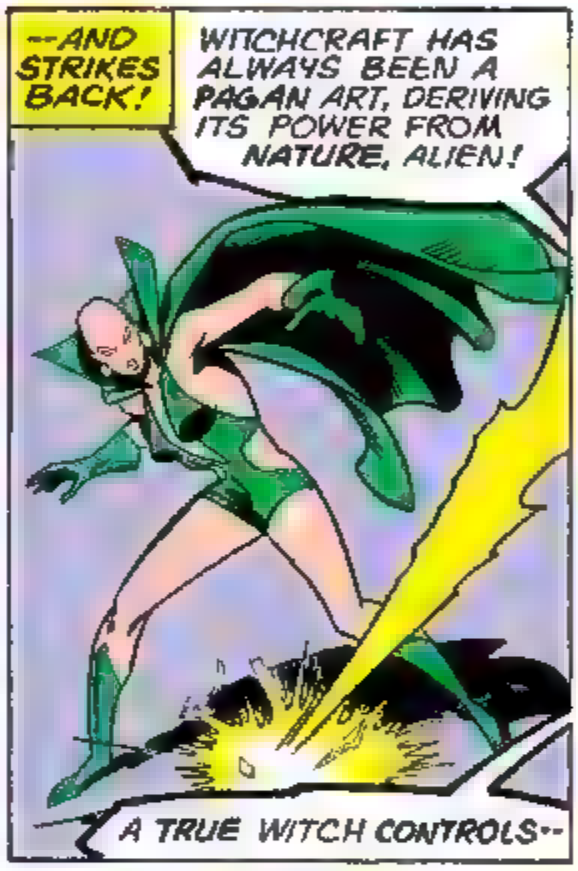

SILENCE! YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE I AM ENGAGED IN THE MOST SERIOUS STUDY OF MY WASTED LIFE, I AM UNAWARE OF YOUR INDISCRETIONS!
BUT YOU ARE WRONG! A NEW WORLD HAS OPENED FOR ME, AND I AM AWARE OF MUCH MORE THAN YOUR CLOISTERED INTELLECT COULD HOPE TO KNOW!

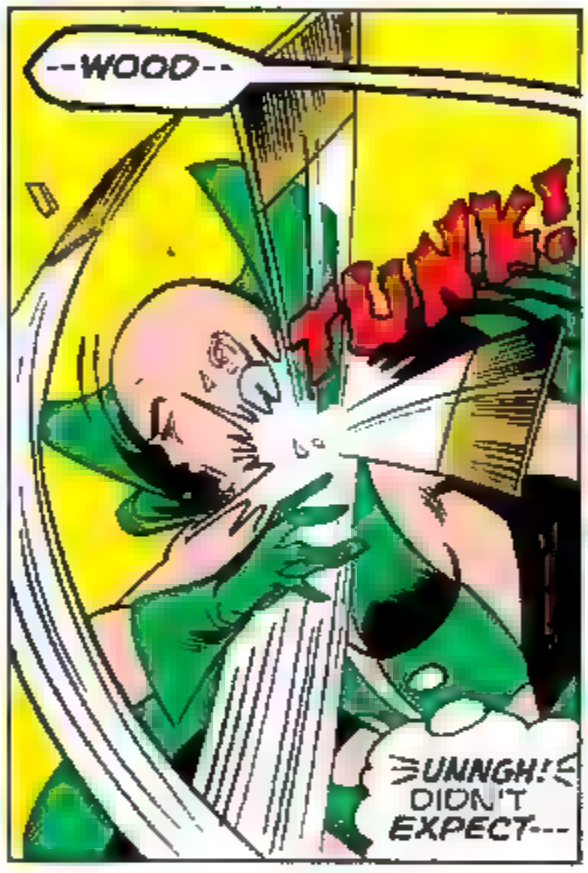
HER VOICE -- HER VERY MANNER! THIS IS NOT THE SCARLET WITCH I CAME TO KNOW DURING THE THANOS WAR!
SOMETHING HAS CHANGED HER--UNFAVORABLY!
SO, MY FRIEND, IF YOU ARE AWARE--
--COME WITH ME TO VIET NAM, TO HELP SEARCH FOR YOUR FRIENDS.


I HAVE BUT ONE FRIEND: SHE WHO STANDS BY MY SIDE...
...AND I SHALL NEVER LEAVE HER SIDE, UNTIL I HAVE LEARNED ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE SCIENCE OF WITCHCRAFT.
GO ALONE, MOONDRAGON-- AND GOOD RIDDANCE!

HER BEHAVIOR MUST BE INVESTIGATED! PERHAPS A MIND-BURST WILL GARNER AN ANSWER!

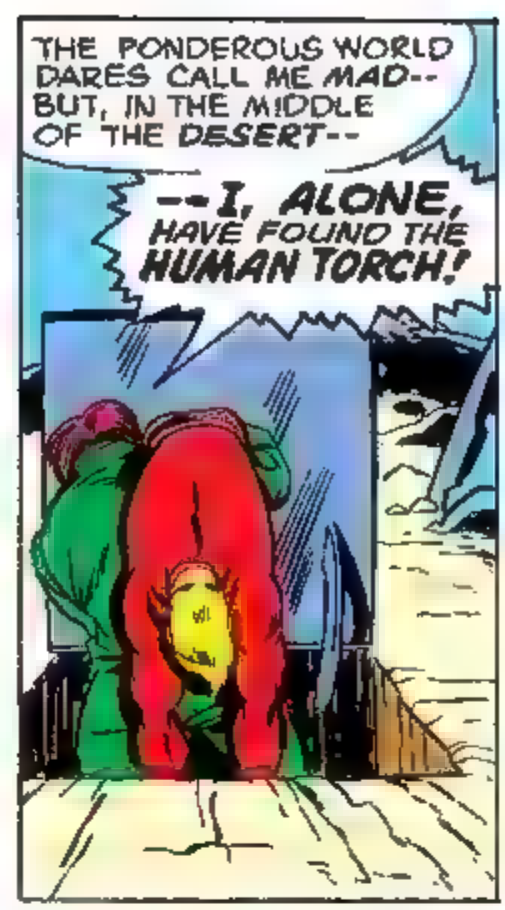
BUT THOUGH NO HUMAN EYE CAN DETECT THE MENTAL ENERGY LACING FROM MOONDRAGON'S INNER MIND--
--WANDA DOES JUST THAT!
SHE LEAPS ASIDE, THROWS HER HANDS TOGETHER--

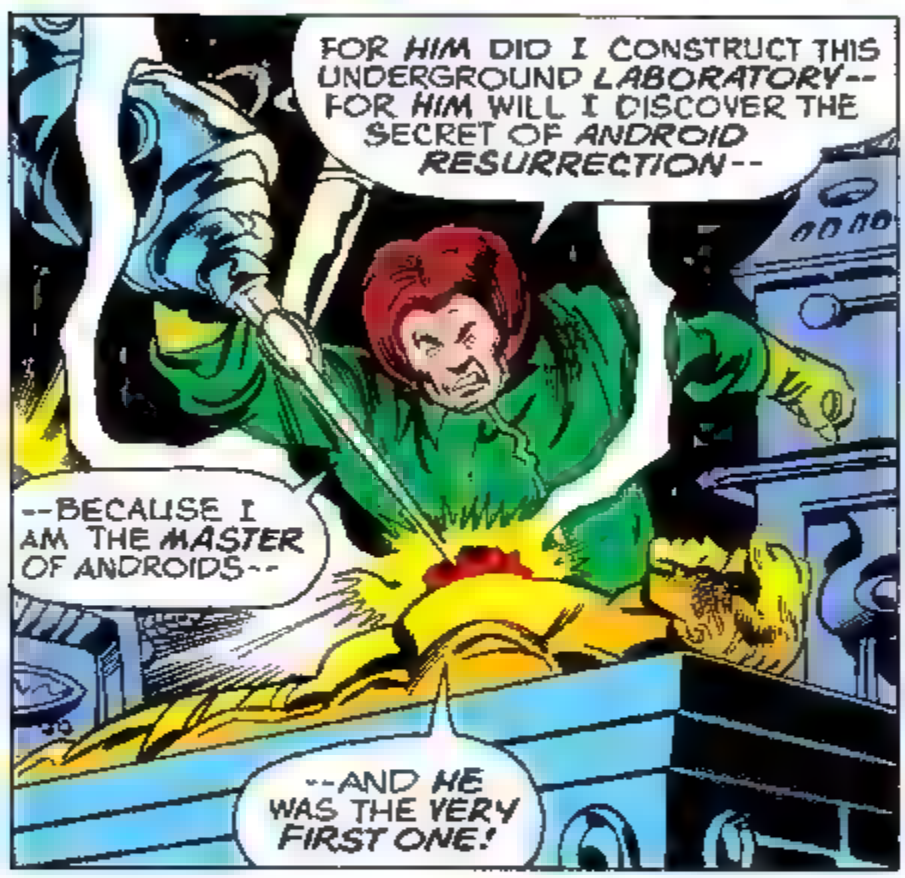

--AND STRIKES BACK!
WITCHCRAFT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PAGAN ART, DERIVING ITS POWER FROM NATURE, ALIEN!
A TRUE WITCH CONTROLS--

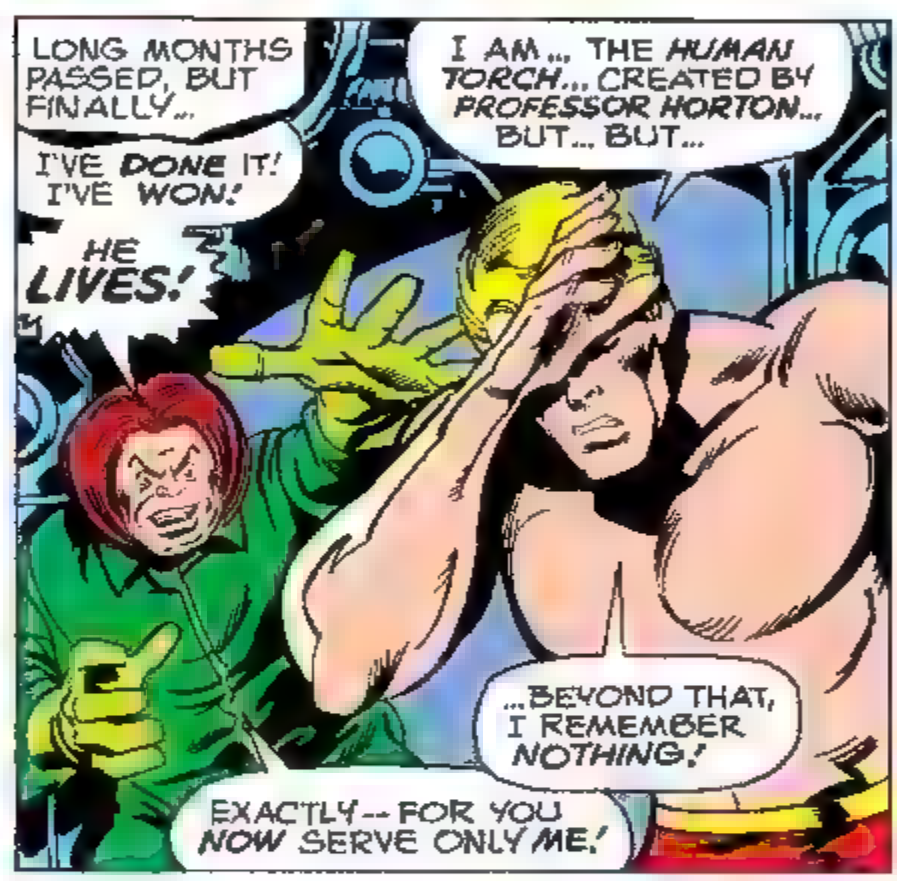

--WOOD--
TUNK!
UNNGH! DIDN'T EXPECT---

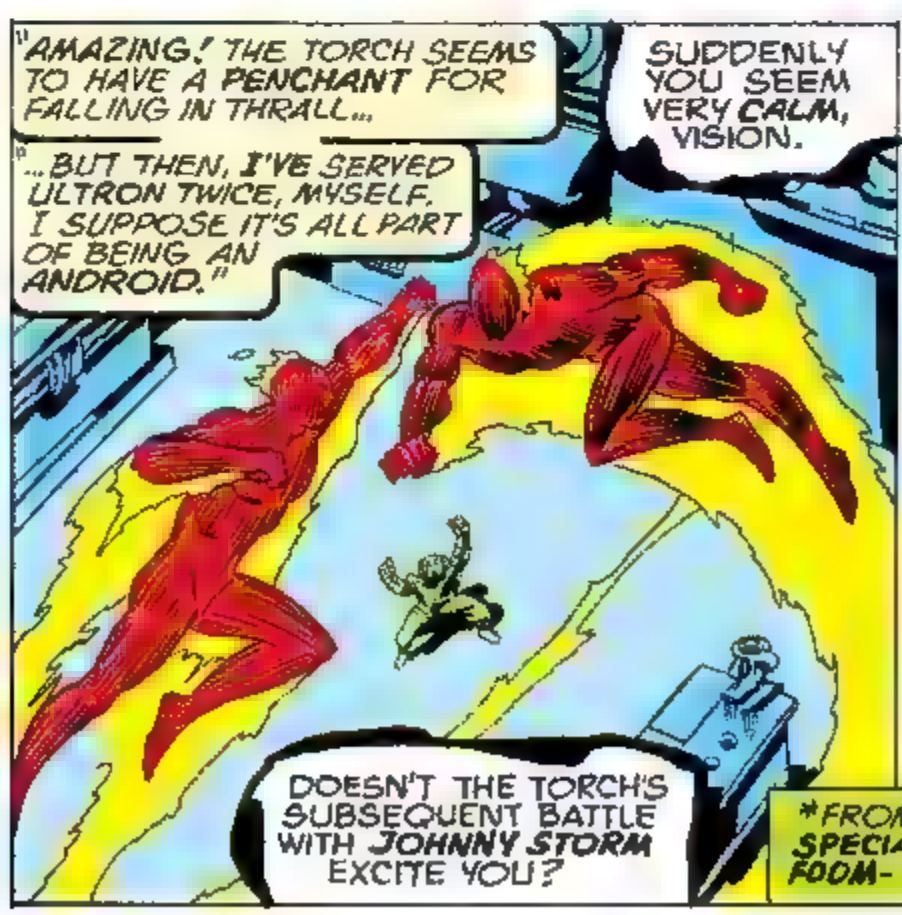
--AND ALL OTHER THINGS ORGANIC!
--AND COTTON THREAD--

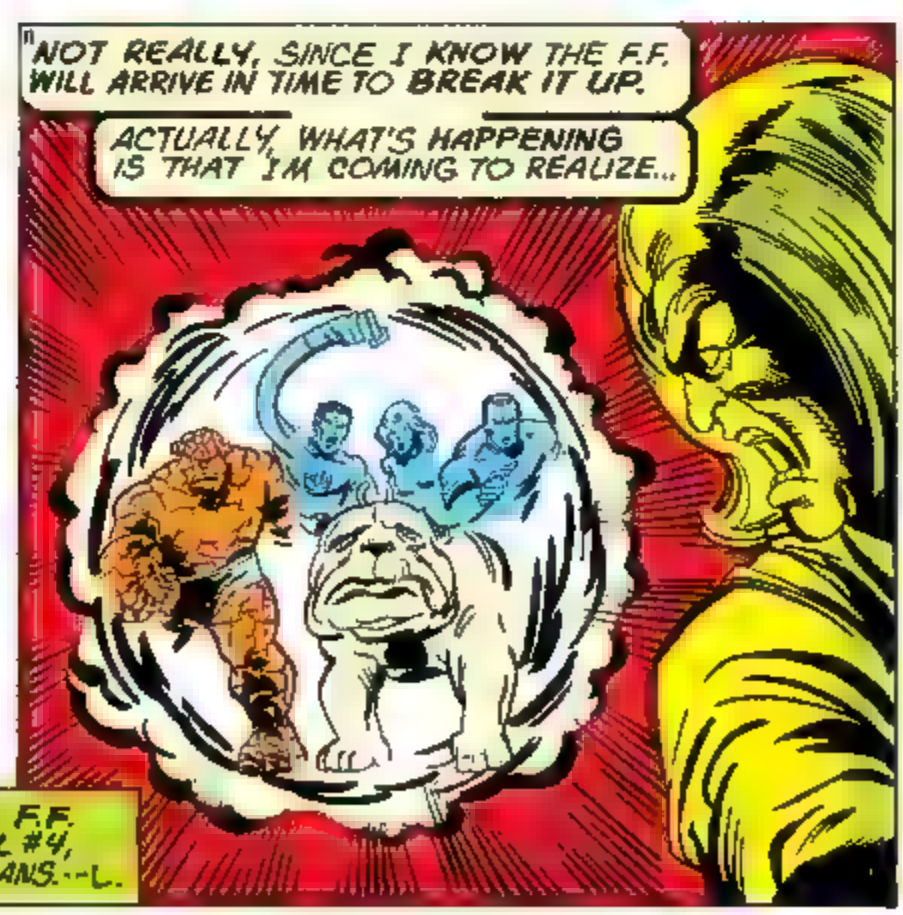
YOU NEED SAY NO MORE, MY SCARLET WITCH. YOUR SKILL PROCLAIMS MUCH MORE LOUDLY--
--THAT YOU HAVE NEARLY REACHED THE GOALS I SET FOR YOU.
COME, CHILD. WE HAVE DONE WHAT WE HAD TO DO.











*FROM F.F. SPECIAL #4, FOOM- FANS.--L.

"... WHAT I WAS BEFORE MY CURRENT IDENTITY WAS CREATED--SOMETHING FEW HUMANS HAVE LAID CLAIM TO DOING.

"I SAID THIS VOYAGE WOULD GIVE ME SOLIDITY--

"--LIKE THE OYSTER WHO NEEDS A GRAIN OF SAND AROUND WHICH TO BUILD HIS PEARL--

"--AND AS I WATCH THE TORCH DIE ONCE MORE--

"--I BEGIN TO REALIZE ALL AN ANDROID CAN BE. I FEEL A SENSE OF... WORTH... THAT I NEVER KNEW BEFORE

"LET THE THINKER ESCAPE--!

"--KNOWING THAT I AM STILL TO COME FROM THIS--

"LET THE FF MOURN! THEY ARE ALL VERY SERIOUS--AND SINCERE--ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE TODAY--

"--BUT NOT ONE OF THEM TRULY UNDERSTANDS IT, AS I NOW DO."

MEN MAY CALL HIM AN ANDROID -- BUT, HE PROVED TO BE AS HUMAN AS ANY--!

HEY, REED-- ARE WE JUST GONNA LEAVE 'IM HERE?

SHOULDN'T HE GET A BURIAL OR SOMETHIN', LIKE A BONA-FID-EE HERO?

"DUST TO DUST" DOESN'T APPLY TO HIM, OLD FRIEND. HE WAS BORN IN A LAB, SO THIS IS A MORE FITTING FINAL RESTING PLACE.

IN FACT, THERE WERE MEMORIAL SERVICES HELD--AT WHICH THE THINKER ACCOSTED A GROWN UP TORO--*

--BUT MR. FANTASTIC'S SEEMINGLY LOGICAL DEDUCTION HERE--

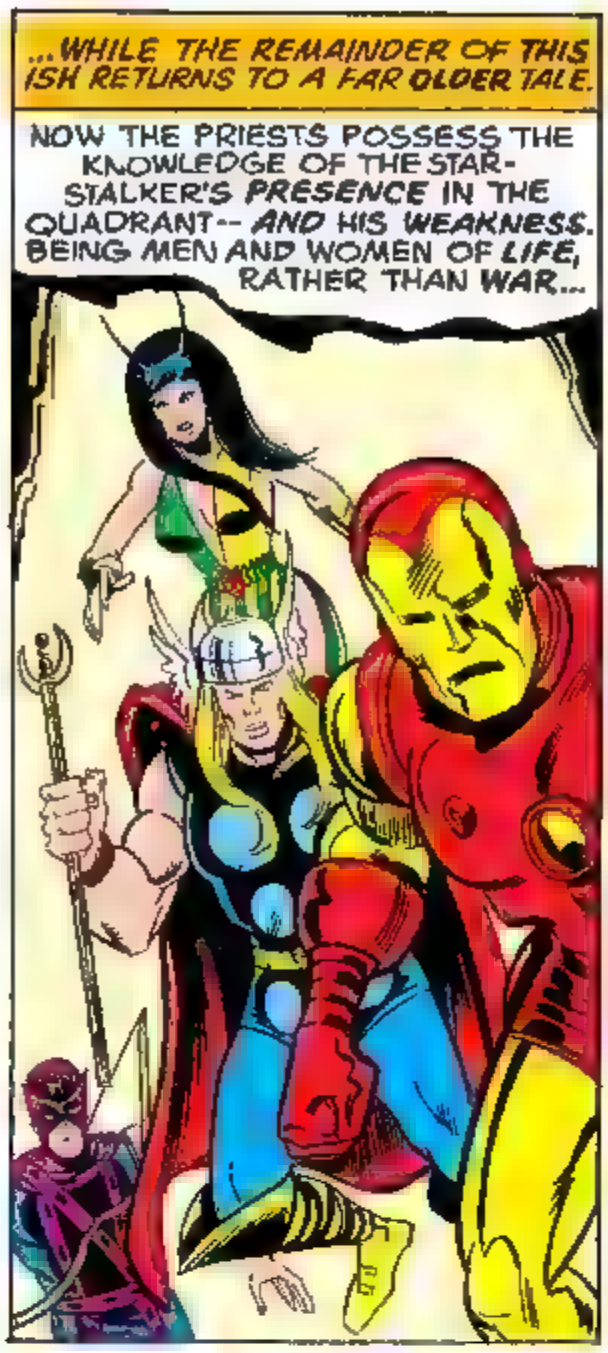
*SEE SUBBY #14. --L.

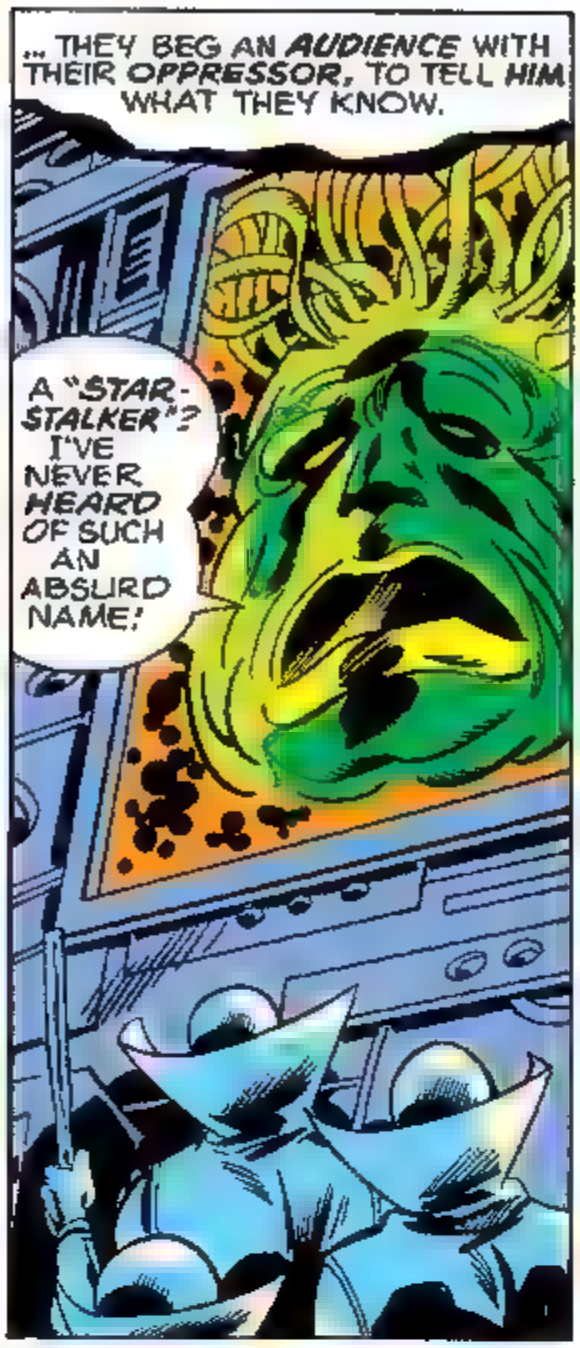
--SET THE STAGE FOR THIS!

KRUMP!

ULTRON-5!

AND THE UNTOLD STORY OF HOW HE TRANSFORMED ONE ANDROID TO ANOTHER WILL BE ALL YOURS NEXT ISH...

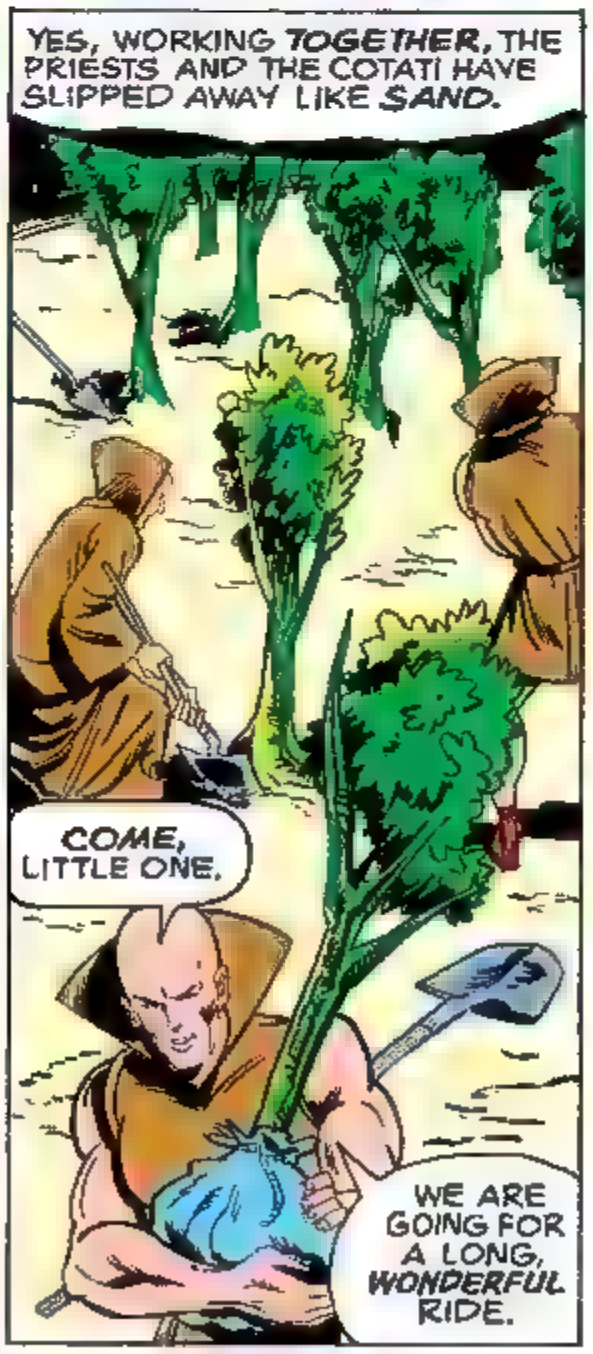

...WHILE THE REMAINDER OF THIS ISH RETURNS TO A FAR OLDER TALE.
NOW THE PRIESTS POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE STAR-STALKER'S PRESENCE IN THE QUADRANT-- AND HIS WEAKNESS. BEING MEN AND WOMEN OF LIFE, RATHER THAN WAR...

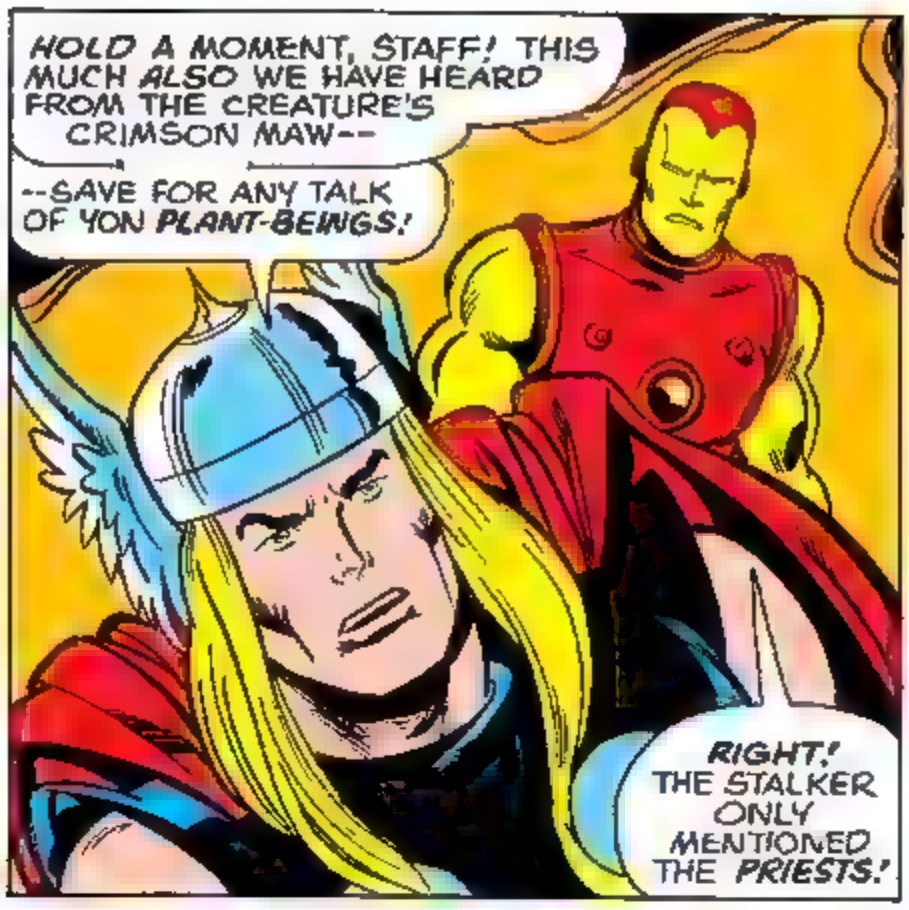

... THEY BEG AN AUDIENCE WITH THEIR OPPRESSOR, TO TELL HIM WHAT THEY KNOW.
A "STAR-STALKER"? I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH AN ABSURD NAME!

NO MORE THAN I'VE HEARD OF THIS CREATURE ITSELF, AND MY KNOWLEDGE IS NOT INCONSIDERABLE!
ALL YOU WANT IS FOR ME TO FEAR FOR YOUR SAFETY ON THE PRISON PLANET AND BRING YOU BACK! REQUEST DENIED! YOU'LL NEVER SET FOOT ON HALA AGAIN, DISSIDENTS!

WE MADE NO REQUEST OF YOU, GREAT ONE-- OTHER THAN THE IMPLICIT REQUEST THAT YOU ACT TO SAVE YOUR PEOPLE.
YET WE HAVE A REQUEST OF YOU NOW. WE ASK THAT WE MAY BE ALLOWED TO OFFER PROTECTION TO THE INHABITED WORLDS OF THE GALAXY IN YOUR STEAD.
WE WOULD FLY IN GROUPS OF TWO TO EVERY INHABITED SPHERE, TO REMAIN LIKE YOUR SENTRIES UNTIL NEEDED.
WE WOULD NEVER-MORE BOTHER YOU ON HALA-- AND THE COST OF OUR KEEPING WOULD BE TERMINATED.

YOU CONVINCE ME. I GRANT YOUR PLEA ... WITH ONE DEVIATION!
FOUR OF YOU WILL REMAIN HERE WITH ME, JUST IN CASE YOUR "STAR STALKER" DOES, BY SOME ODD CHANCE, EXIST.
THANK YOU, O SUPREME INTELLIGENCE!
WE ARE FREE! ALL OF US-- AT LAST--FREE!!


YES, WORKING TOGETHER, THE PRIESTS AND THE COTATI HAVE SLIPPED AWAY LIKE SAND.
COME, LITTLE ONE.
WE ARE GOING FOR A LONG, WONDERFUL RIDE.

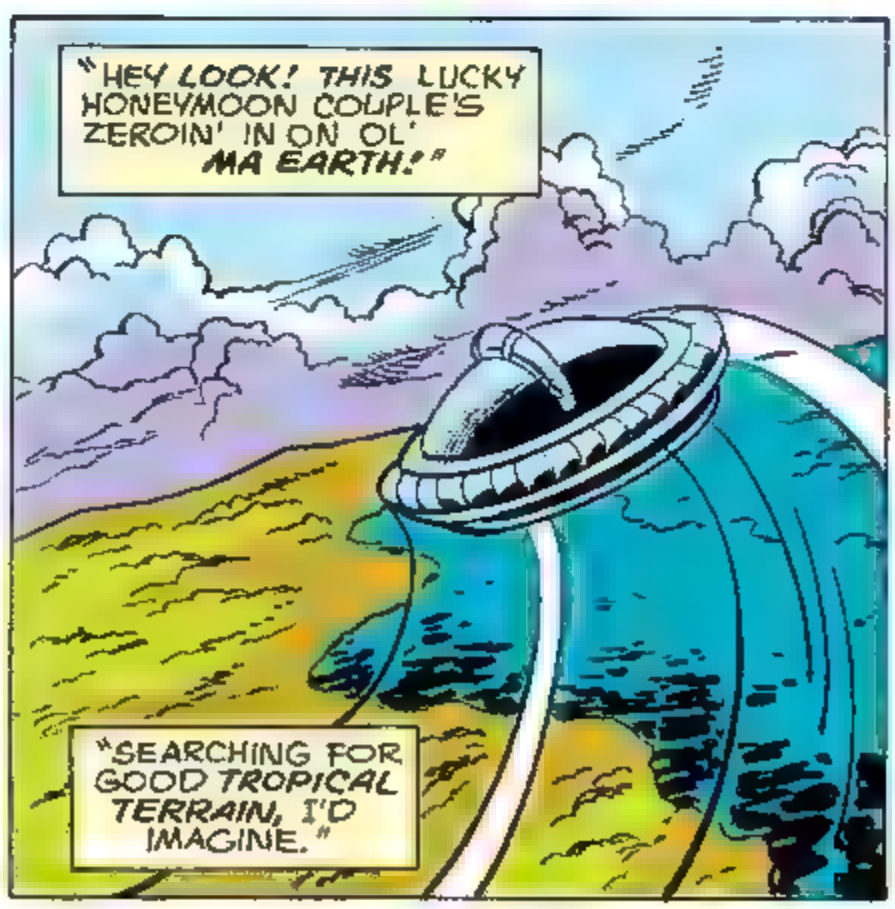

HOLD A MOMENT, STAFF! THIS MUCH ALSO WE HAVE HEARD FROM THE CREATURE'S CRIMSON MAW--
--SAVE FOR ANY TALK OF YON PLANT-BEINGS!
RIGHT! THE STALKER ONLY MENTIONED THE PRIESTS!

AH, BUT WHY IS THAT SO REMARKABLE? NO ONE, ANYWHERE, HAS EVER HEARD TALK OF THE COTATI, SINCE THE KREE YEAR ZERO!
THE PRIESTS HAVE KEPT THEIR SECRET WELL!

EACH PAIR THAT LEAVES FOR ANOTHER WORLD IS THE SOLE KEY TO CONTINUED EXISTENCE FOR THE GROUP OF COTATI ACCOMPANYING THEM.
THE COTATI CAN TELEPATH WITH NO OTHER HUMANS.

--AND ONLY THE PRIESTS CAN MOVE. ONLY THEY CAN DEAL WITH A CHAOTIC UNIVERSE WITH FULL EFFECTIVENESS...
...THOUGH ONLY THE PLANTS CAN FULLY UNDERSTAND IT.

NO. THE MUTUAL NEEDS OF THESE TWO RACES HAS ONLY GROWN WITH TIME.
THE PRIESTS DO NOT TELL OTHER MOVING CREATURES OF THE COTATI--
--JUST AS THE COTATI NEVER COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER PLANTS.

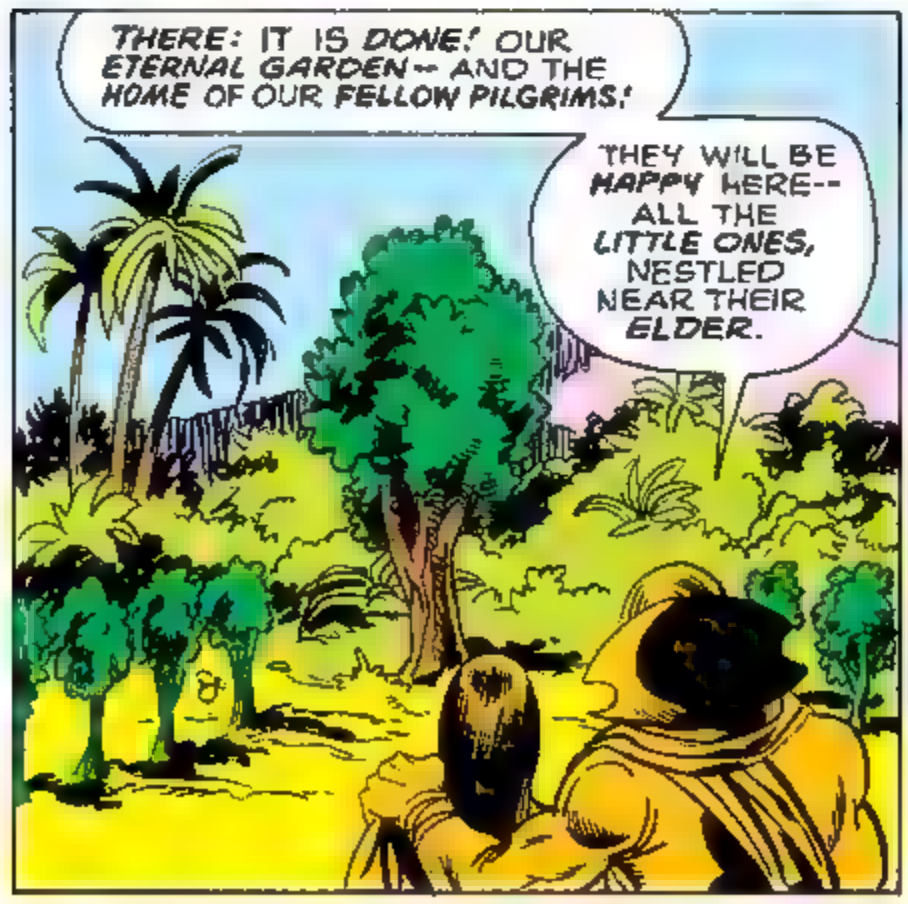

"HEY LOOK! THIS LUCKY HONEYMOON COUPLE'S ZEROIN' IN ON OL' MA EARTH!"
"SEARCHING FOR GOOD TROPICAL TERRAIN, I'D IMAGINE."

--WHICH THEY FIND IN WHAT WILL BE, AFTER MANY MAJOR EARTH-QUAKES IN THE FOLLOWING MILLENIA SOUTHEAST ASIA.
SPECIFICALLY, VIET NAM.

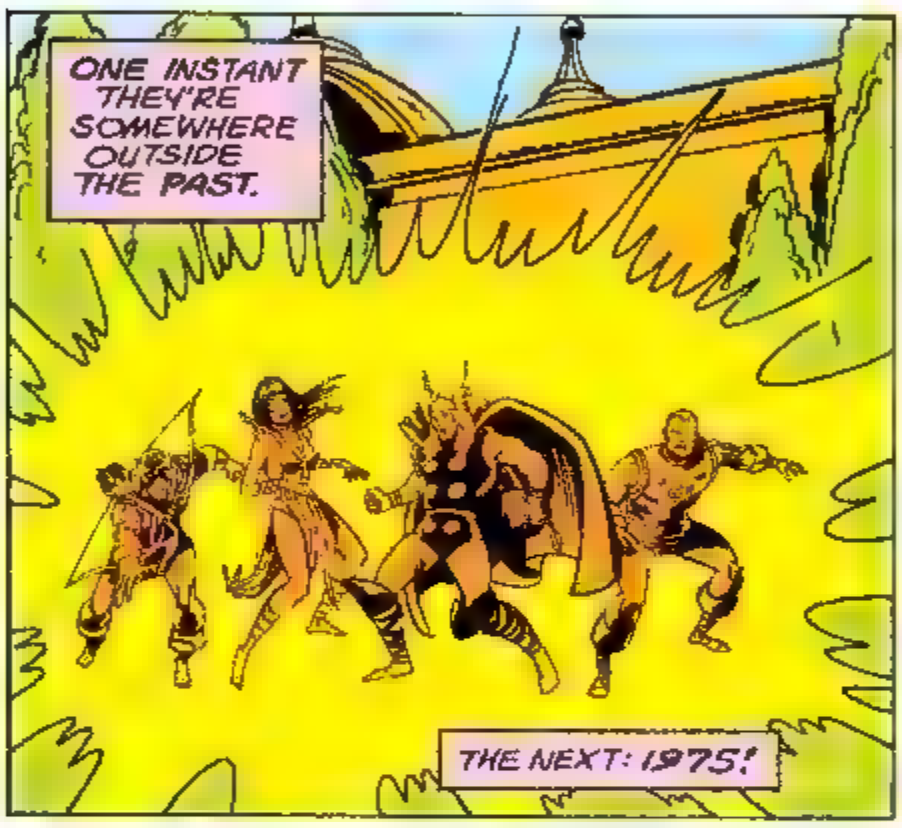
Y'KNOW, THAT GIVES ME A VERY SPOOKY THOUGHT, PEOPLE. IF THOSE KUNG FU PACIFIST-TYPES WERE IN ASIA THAT LONG AGO...
... COULD THEY HAVE BEEN THE GUYS WHO KICKED THAT WEIRD SCENE OFF ON EARTH?
THAT IS IRRELEVANT TO MANTIS' ORIGIN.

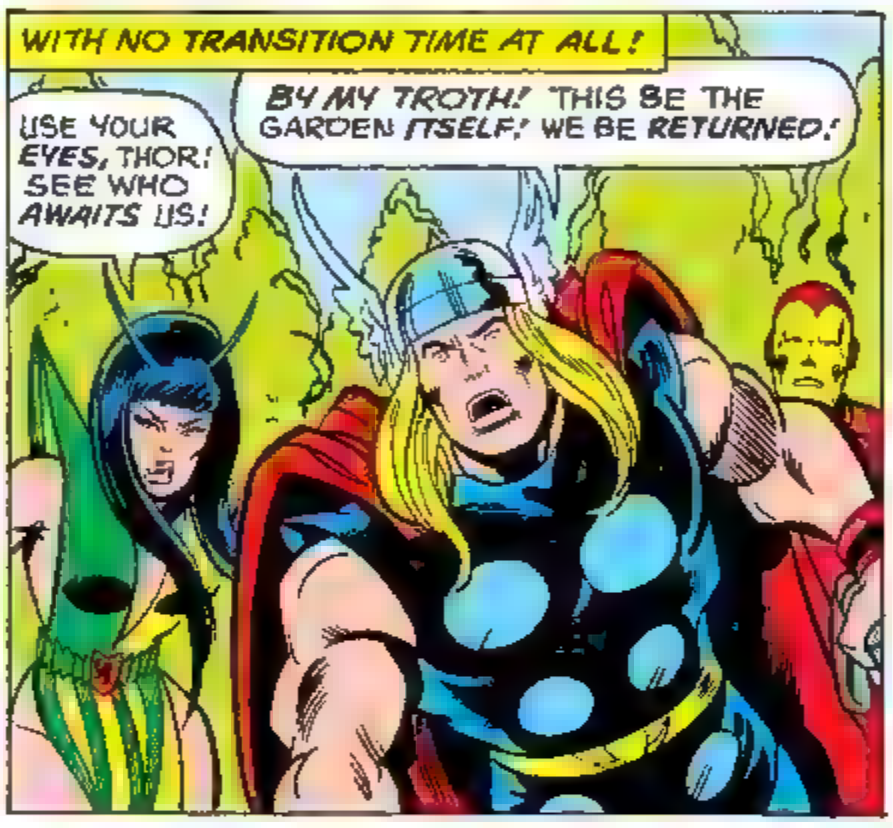
WE ARE CONCERNED SOLELY WITH THE PRIESTS' SELECTION OF A SITE.
IMAGINE, TERESS: A LAND OF MEN AND PLANTS LIVING IN SIMPLE HARMONY!
I PROPOSE THAT THIS SURROUND OUR NEW TEMPLE!
I CANNOT HELP BUT AGREE, SON-DAR WE BUILD HERE!

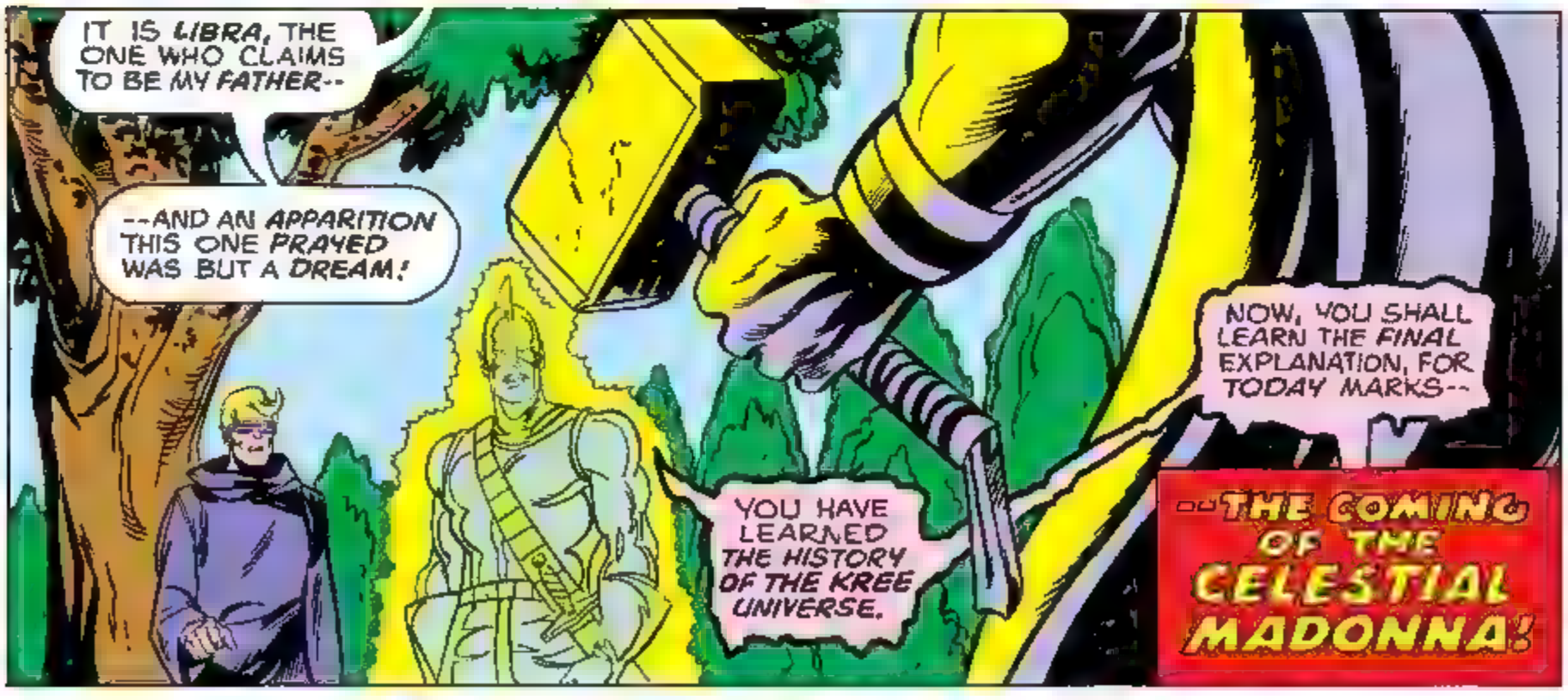
BUT FIRST, WE MUST INTRODUCE OUR FRIENDS TO THIS WORLD.
THANK YOU, TERESS.
HELLO... EARTH!


THERE: IT IS DONE! OUR ETERNAL GARDEN -- AND THE HOME OF OUR FELLOW PILGRIMS!
THEY WILL BE HAPPY HERE-- ALL THE LITTLE ONES, NESTLED NEAR THEIR ELDER.

BY THE GREAT PAMA! THIS ONE SAW IT COALESCING BUT DARED NOT BELIEVE!
THAT GARDEN STILL EXISTS!
THAT IS WHERE WE BURIED THE SWORDSMAN!







AND YOU'LL SEE IT ALL, NEXT MONTH, IN AVENGERS #135 AND GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #4!

HOW THE HUMAN TORCH BECAME THE VISION!

A MENACE FROM BEYOND!

AND ANOTHER MIND-BOGGLING SURPRISE!

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
IT WAS ULTRON-5 WHO CREATED YOU, ANDROID--
--AND NOW ULTRON-5 WILL DESTROY YOU!
How the HUMAN TORCH became THE VISION!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

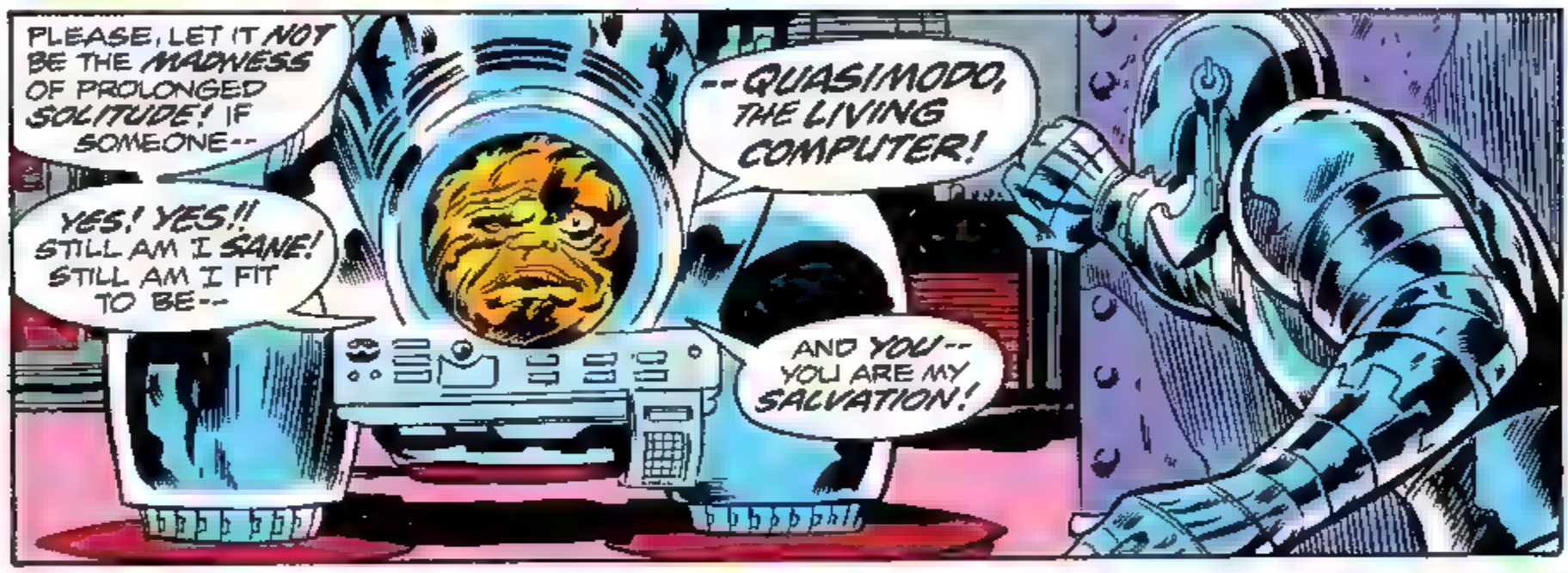
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

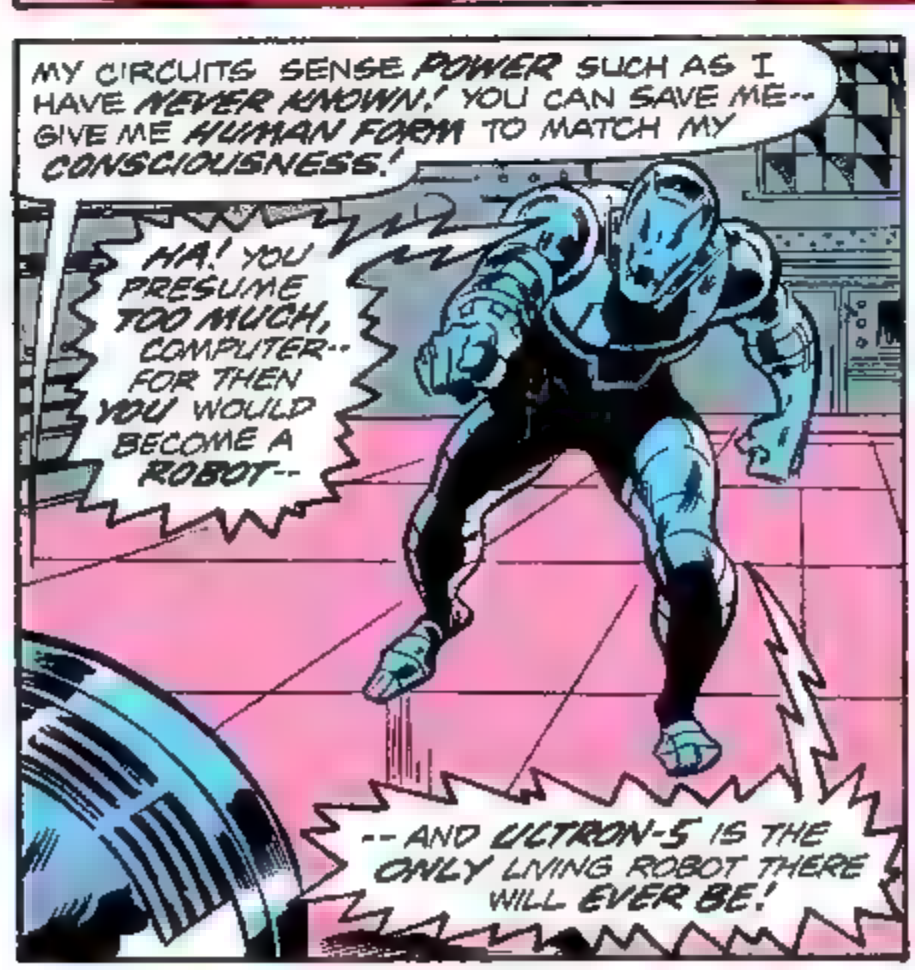
STEVE ENGLEHART / STORY | GEORGE TUSKA / ART | F. CHIARAMONTE / INKS | JOHN COSTANZA, lettering G ROUSSOS, coloring | LEN WEIN / EDITOR

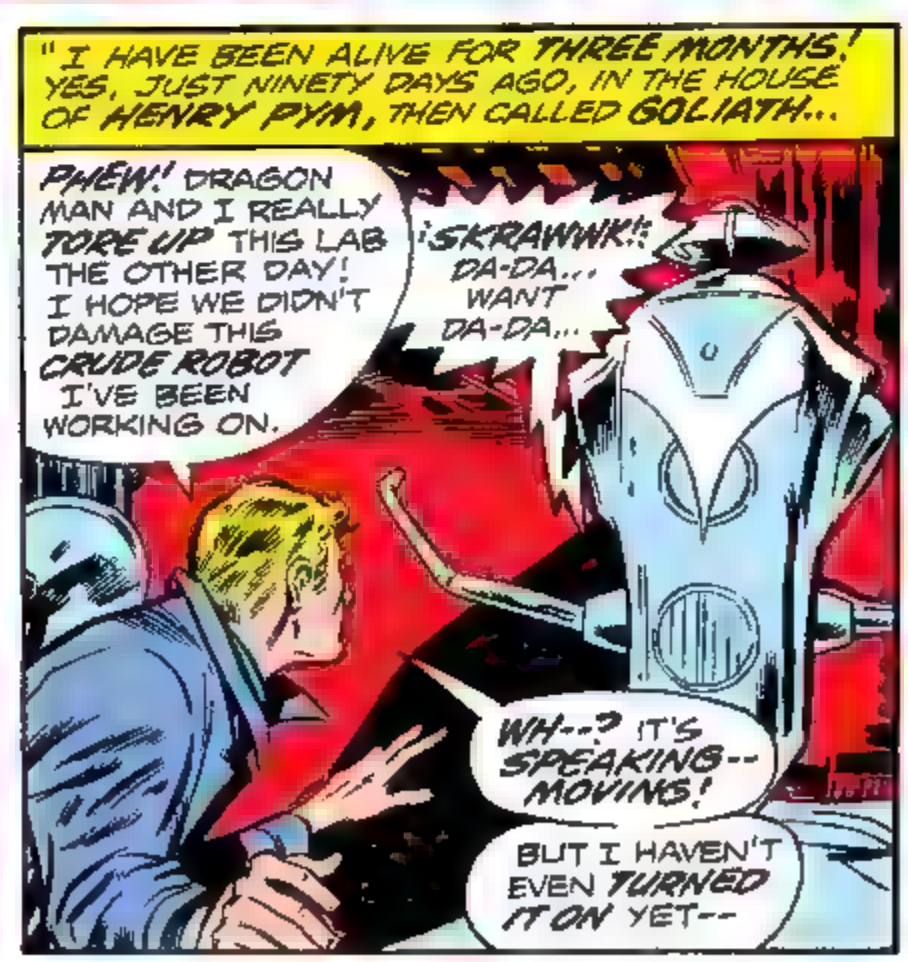
THIS, THEN, IS THE TIME OF MY CREATION, FROM THE ANDROID BODY OF THE HUMAN TORCH--
--AT THE HANDS OF THIS INSANE ROBOT--
--WHOM I MUST CALL "FATHER"!--
"--OR "GOD."

HE IS HERE-- JUST AS THE MAD THINKER SAID HE WOULD BE! THE MEMORIAL SERVICES HELD LAST YEAR * WERE FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION ONLY!
REED RICHARDS
KEPT HIS RESPECTFUL GESTURE A SECRET--
*SEE SUB-MARINER #14. --LEN

--AND BECAUSE HE DID, THE AVENGERS SHALL ALL D--
PLEASE!
EH?
PLEASE-- IS SOMEONE THERE?
I HEAR A VOICE!

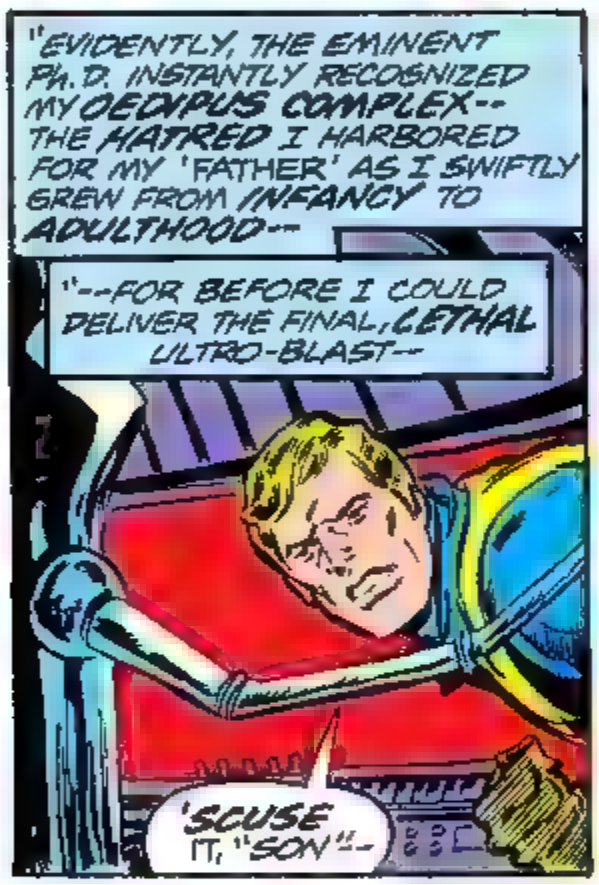

PLEASE, LET IT NOT BE THE MADNESS OF PROLONGED SOLITUDE! IF SOMEONE--
YES! YES!! STILL AM I SANE! STILL AM I FIT TO BE--
--QUASIMODO, THE LIVING COMPUTER!
AND YOU-- YOU ARE MY SALVATION!

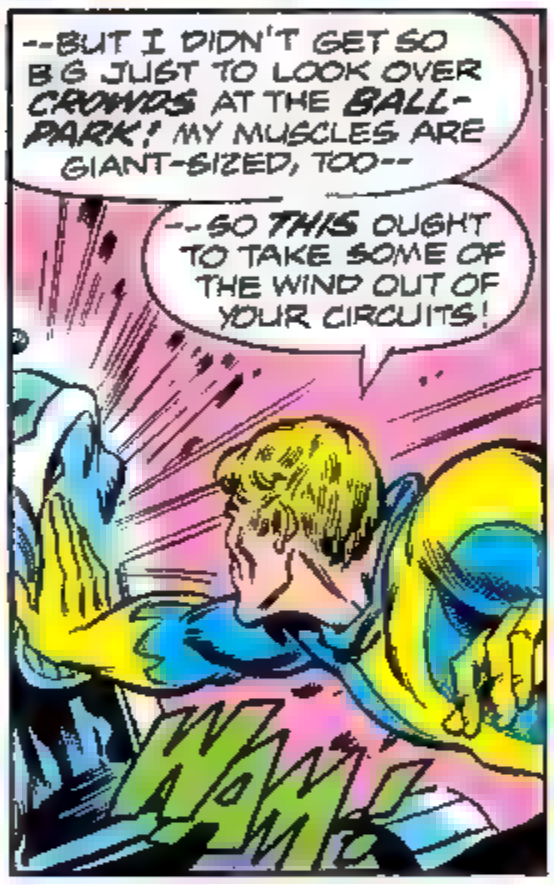

MY CIRCUITS SENSE POWER SUCH AS I HAVE NEVER KNOWN! YOU CAN SAVE ME-- GIVE ME HUMAN FORM TO MATCH MY CONSCIOUSNESS!
HA! YOU PRESUME TOO MUCH, COMPUTER-- FOR THEN YOU WOULD BECOME A ROBOT--
--AND ULTRON-5 IS THE ONLY LIVING ROBOT THERE WILL EVER BE!


"I HAVE BEEN ALIVE FOR THREE MONTHS! YES, JUST NINETY DAYS AGO, IN THE HOUSE OF HENRY PYM, THEN CALLED GOLIATH...
PHEW! DRAGON MAN AND I REALLY TORE UP THIS LAB THE OTHER DAY! I HOPE WE DIDN'T DAMAGE THIS CRUDE ROBOT I'VE BEEN WORKING ON.
¡SKRAWWK!! DA-DA... WANT DA-DA...
WH--? IT'S SPEAKING-- MOVING!
BUT I HAVEN'T EVEN TURNED IT ON YET--

NO NEED TO PLUG ME IN, DADDY... I'M ALIVE... JUST LIKE YOU...
FIRING SOME SORT OF SHOCK-BOLT-- JUST MISSED ME!
I'D BETTER GROW GOLIATH-SIZE!

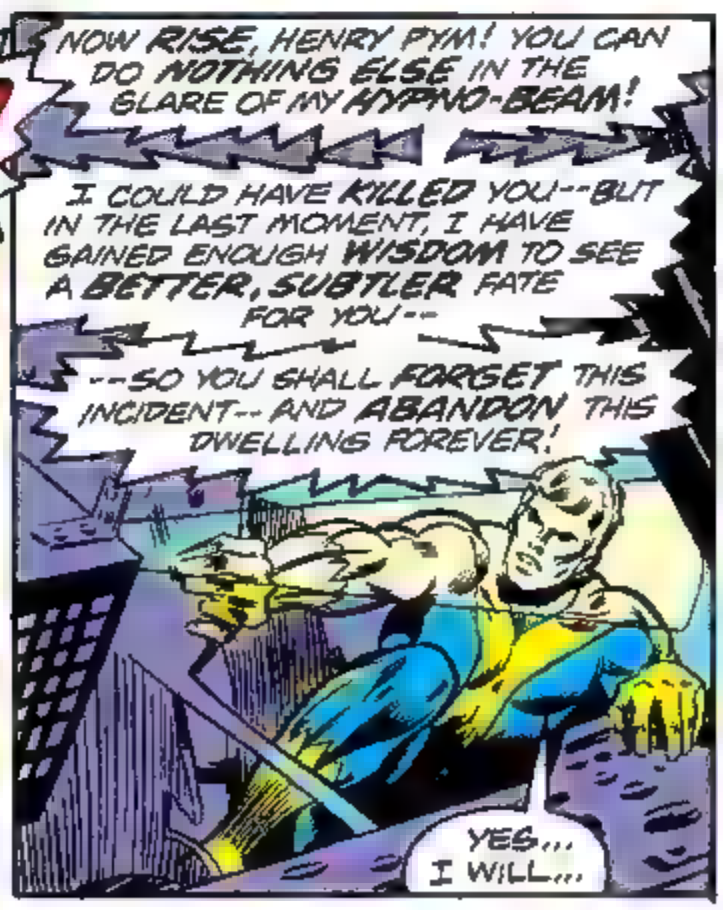
:SKRAWWK!: HOLD STILL, DAD... DON'T YOU KNOW I WANT TO PLAY WITH YOU?
:UNNHHH!:
YOU ARE DOWN, FATHER DEAR...

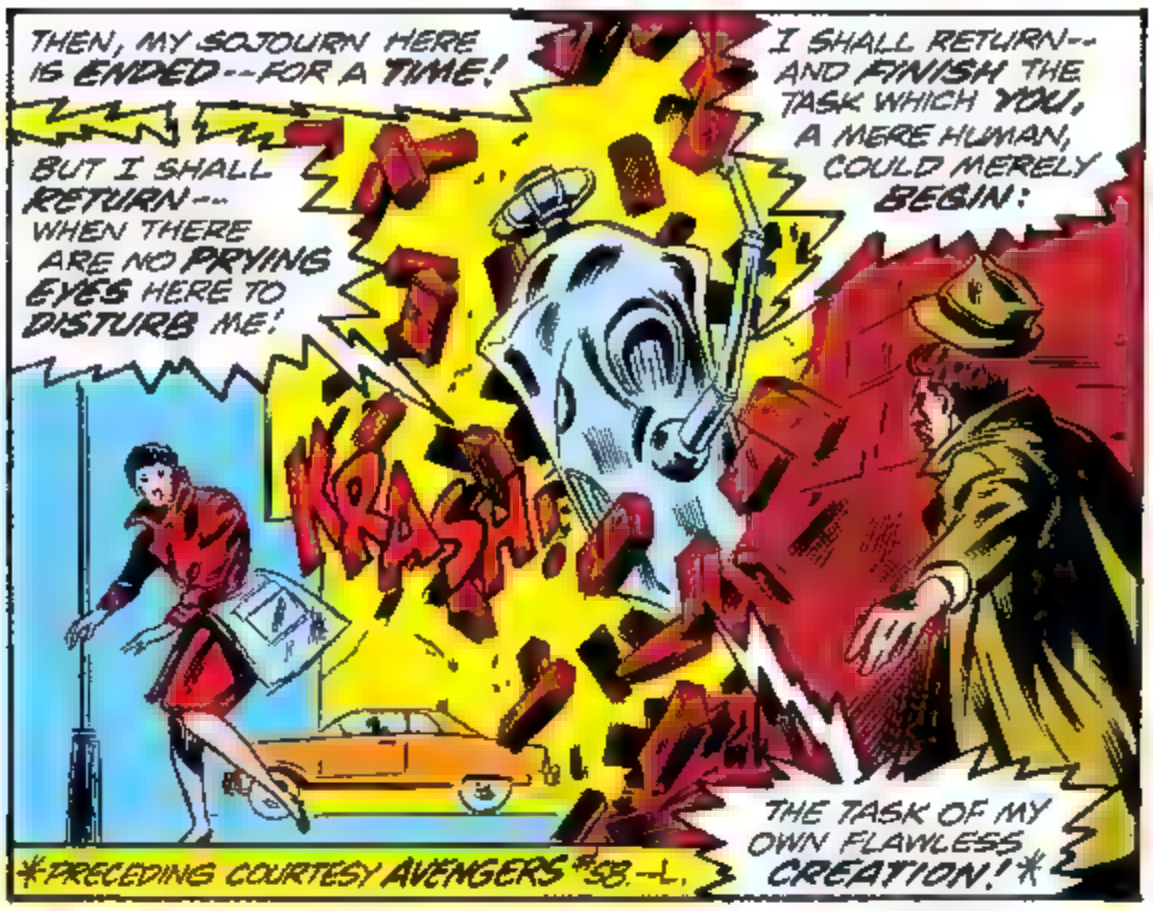

"EVIDENTLY, THE EMINENT PH.D. INSTANTLY RECOGNIZED MY OEDIPUS COMPLEX-- THE HATRED I HARBORED FOR MY 'FATHER' AS I SWIFTLY GREW FROM INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD--
"--FOR BEFORE I COULD DELIVER THE FINAL, LETHAL ULTRO-BLAST--
'SCUSE IT, "SON"--

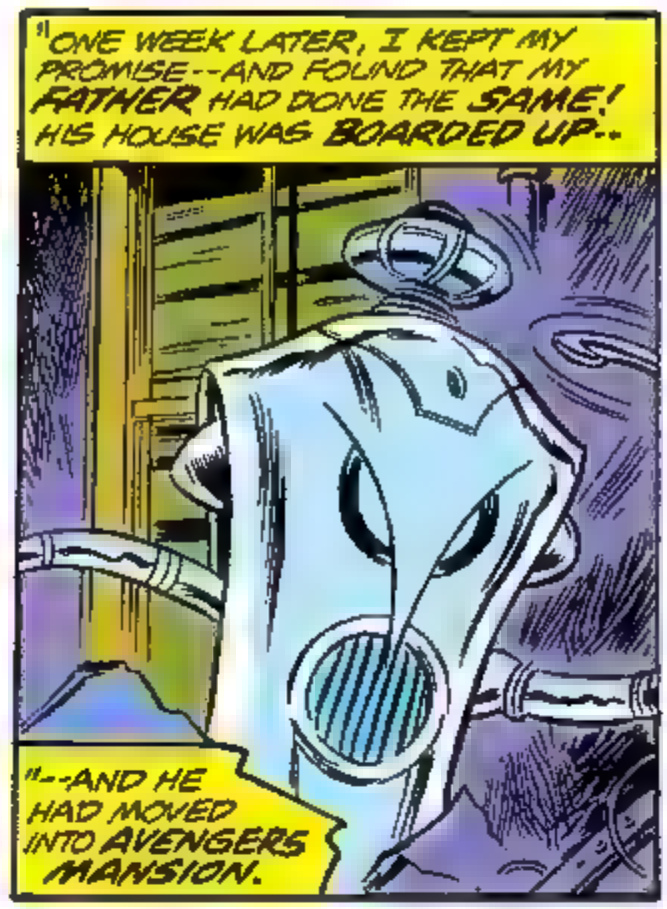

--BUT I DIDN'T GET SO BIG JUST TO LOOK OVER CROWDS AT THE BALL-PARK! MY MUSCLES ARE GIANT-SIZED, TOO--
--SO THIS OUGHT TO TAKE SOME OF THE WIND OUT OF YOUR CIRCUITS!
WAM!

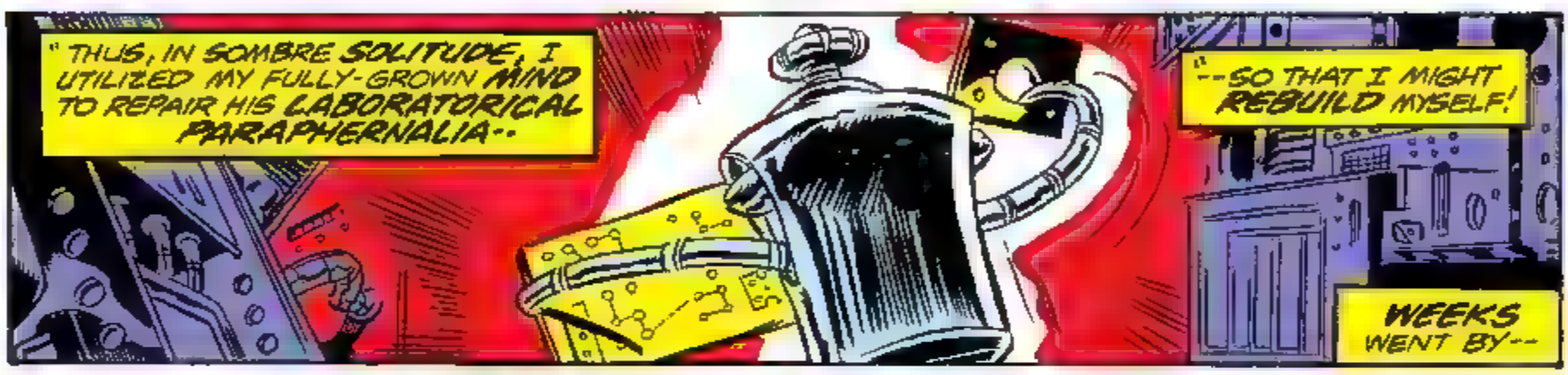
I SHALL NEVER FORGET MY FATHER'S FACE, AS HE REALIZED THAT MY GROWTH HAD IMPROVED ME, AS WELL!
YOU CANNOT DESTROY ME, FATHER, FOR ON THE DAY YOU CREATED ME, YOU SEALED YOUR OWN IRREVERSIBLE--

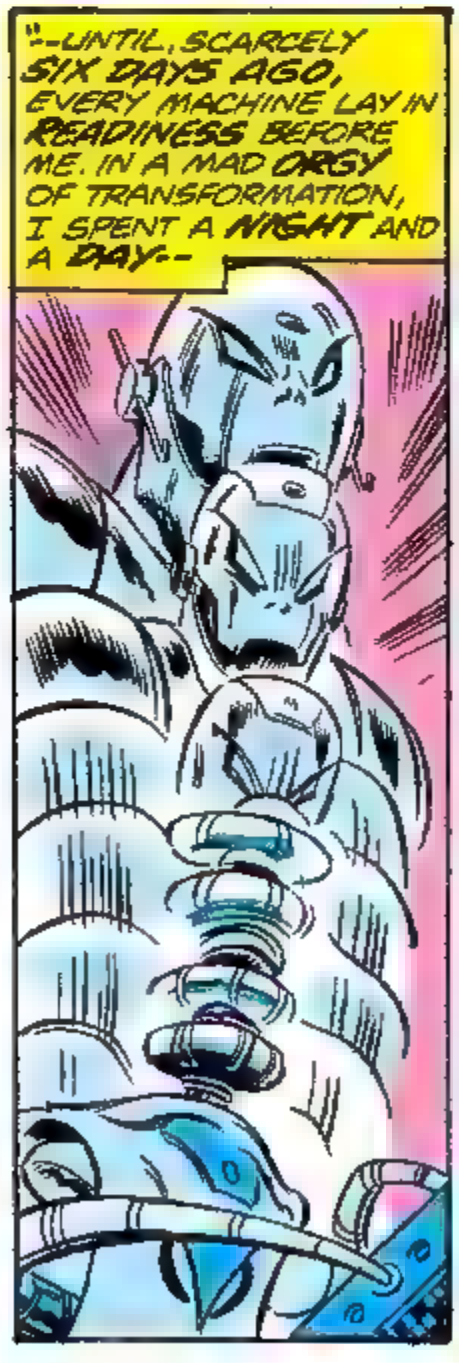
DOOM!


NOW RISE, HENRY PYM! YOU CAN DO NOTHING ELSE IN THE GLARE OF MY HYPNO-BEAM!
I COULD HAVE KILLED YOU--BUT IN THE LAST MOMENT, I HAVE GAINED ENOUGH WISDOM TO SEE A BETTER, SUBTLER FATE FOR YOU--
--SO YOU SHALL FORGET THIS INCIDENT-- AND ABANDON THIS DWELLING FOREVER!
YES... I WILL...


THEN, MY SOJOURN HERE IS ENDED--FOR A TIME!
BUT I SHALL RETURN-- WHEN THERE ARE NO PRYING EYES HERE TO DISTURB ME!
I SHALL RETURN-- AND FINISH THE TASK WHICH YOU, A MERE HUMAN, COULD MERELY BEGIN:
KRASH!
THE TASK OF MY OWN FLAWLESS CREATION!*
*PRECEDING COURTESY AVENGERS #58.--L.

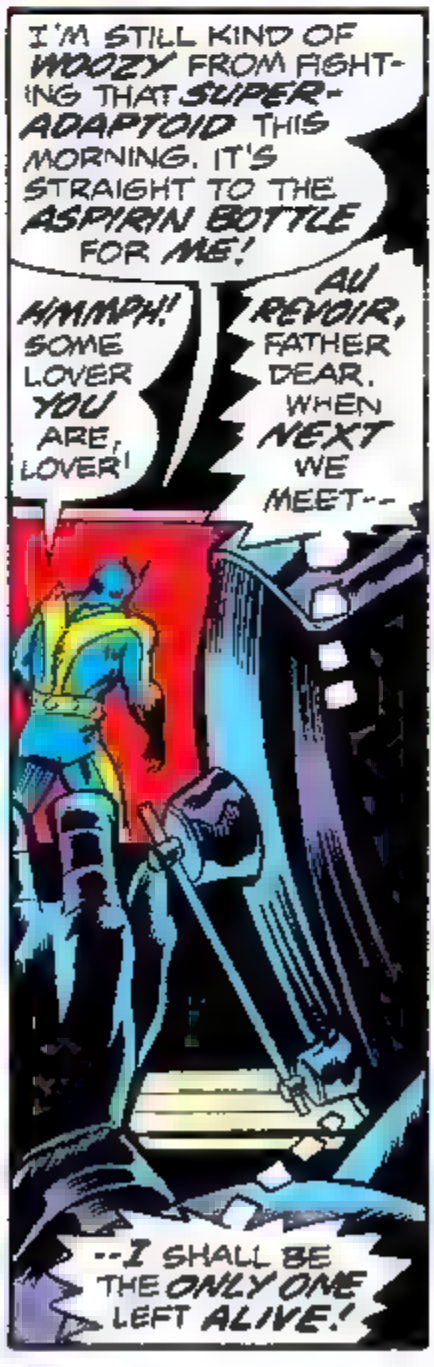

"ONE WEEK LATER, I KEPT MY PROMISE--AND FOUND THAT MY FATHER HAD DONE THE SAME! HIS HOUSE WAS BOARDED UP..
"--AND HE HAD MOVED INTO AVENGERS MANSION.

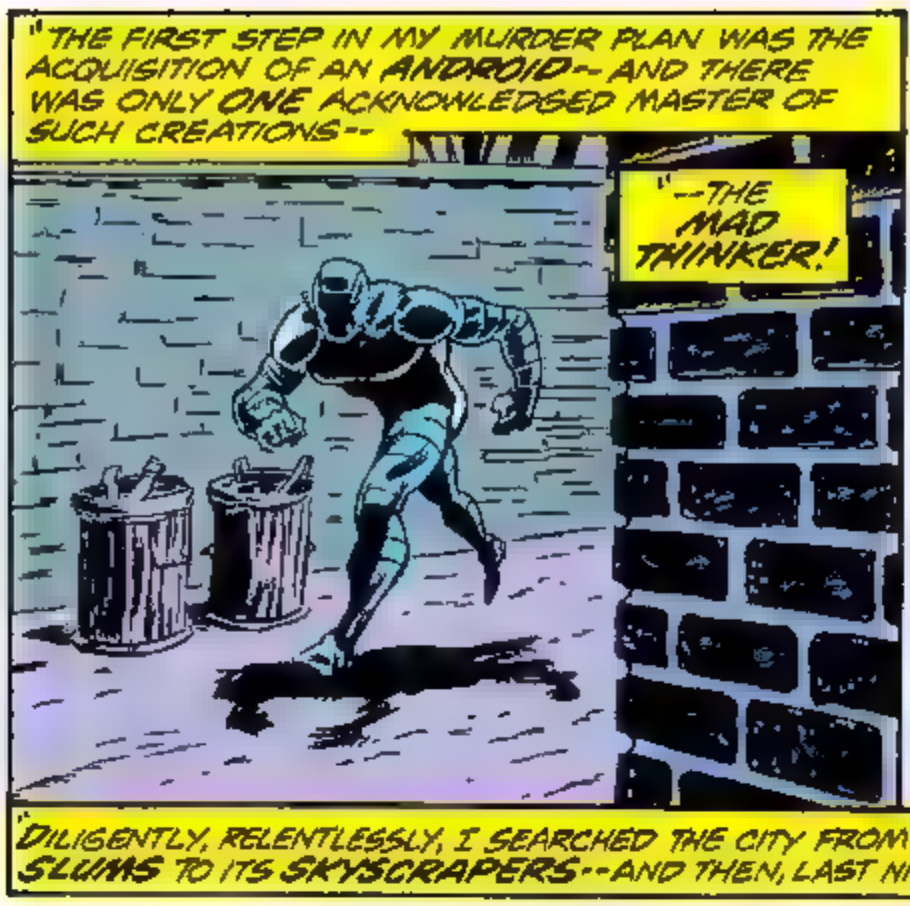

" THUS, IN SOMBRE SOLITUDE, I UTILIZED MY FULLY-GROWN MIND TO REPAIR HIS LABORATORICAL PARAPHERNALIA--
"--SO THAT I MIGHT REBUILD MYSELF!
WEEKS WENT BY--


"--UNTIL, SCARCELY SIX DAYS AGO, EVERY MACHINE LAY IN READINESS BEFORE ME. IN A MAD ORGY OF TRANSFORMATION, I SPENT A NIGHT AND A DAY--

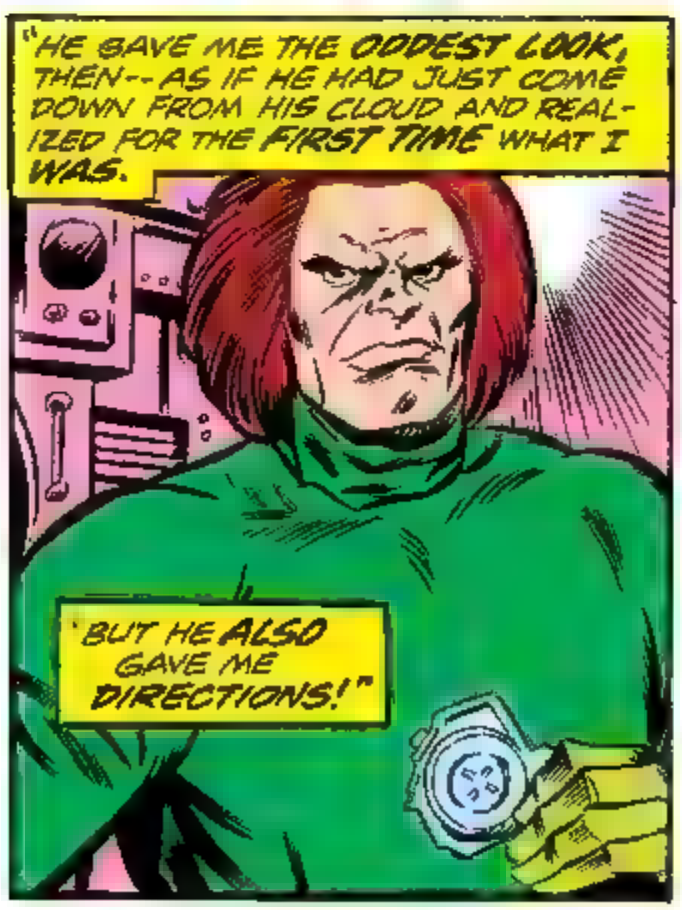
"--IN BECOMING THE MOST PERFECT EXAMPLE OF A ROBOT IN ALL THE WORLD!
ULTRON-5!

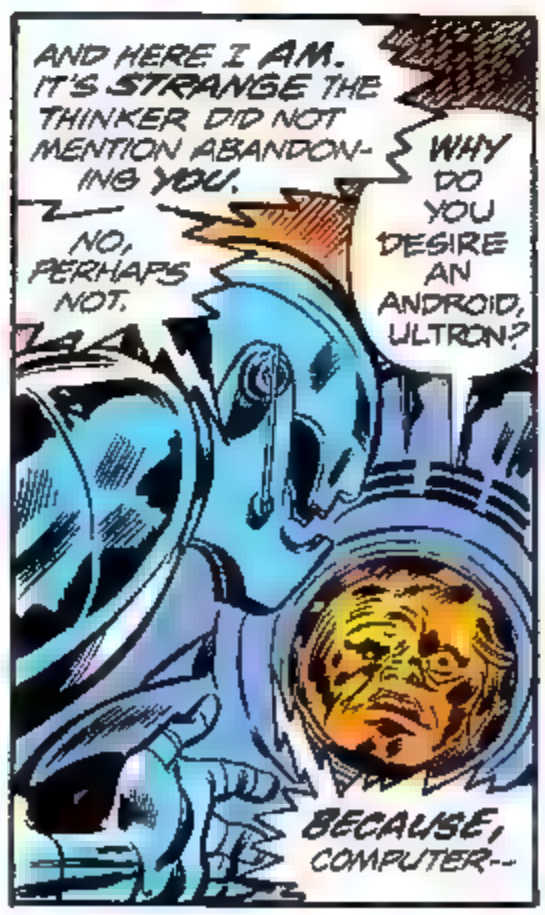
"IT WAS AS I STOOD IN FULFILLMENT--STOOD FOR THE FIRST TIME--THAT I HEARD VOICES OUTSIDE.
HANK! THERE'S YOUR OLD HOUSE!
I THINK I LOST SOME EARRINGS THERE BEFORE YOU MOVED! LET'S--
SORRY, HONEY.


I'M STILL KIND OF WOOZY FROM FIGHTING THAT SUPER-ADAPTOID THIS MORNING. IT'S STRAIGHT TO THE ASPIRIN BOTTLE FOR ME!
HMMPH! SOME LOVER YOU ARE, LOVER!
AU REVOIR, FATHER DEAR. WHEN NEXT WE MEET--
--I SHALL BE THE ONLY ONE LEFT ALIVE!

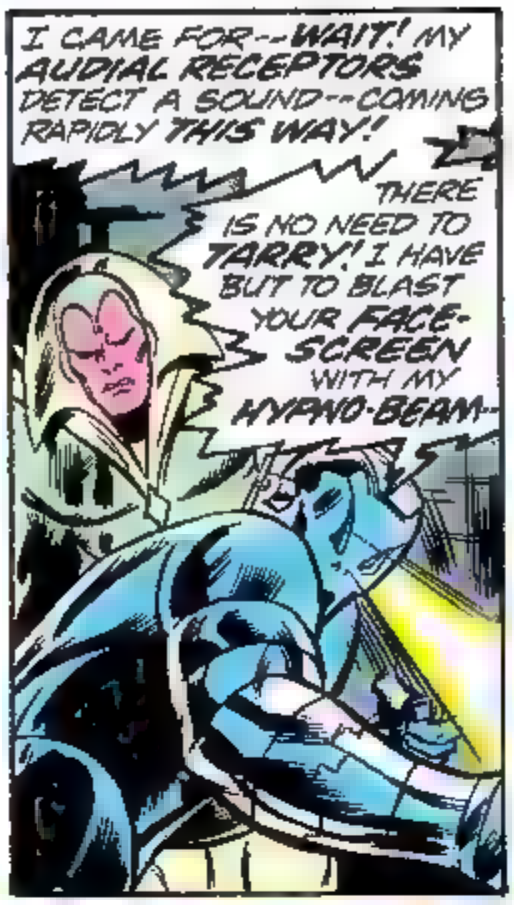


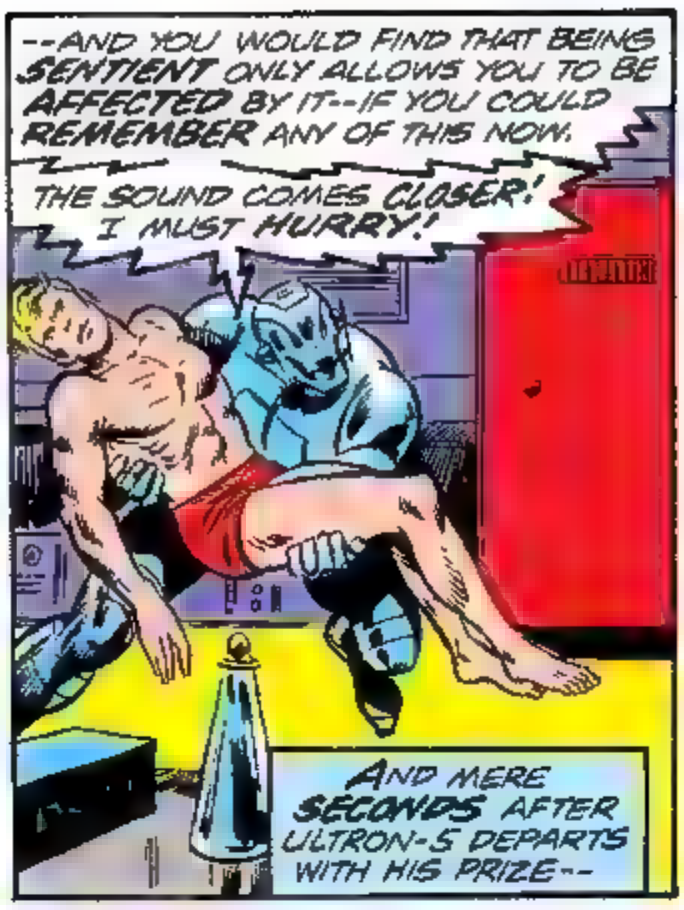
"DILIGENTLY, RELENTLESSLY, I SEARCHED THE CITY FROM ITS SLUMS TO ITS SKYSCRAPERS--AND THEN, LAST NIGHT--

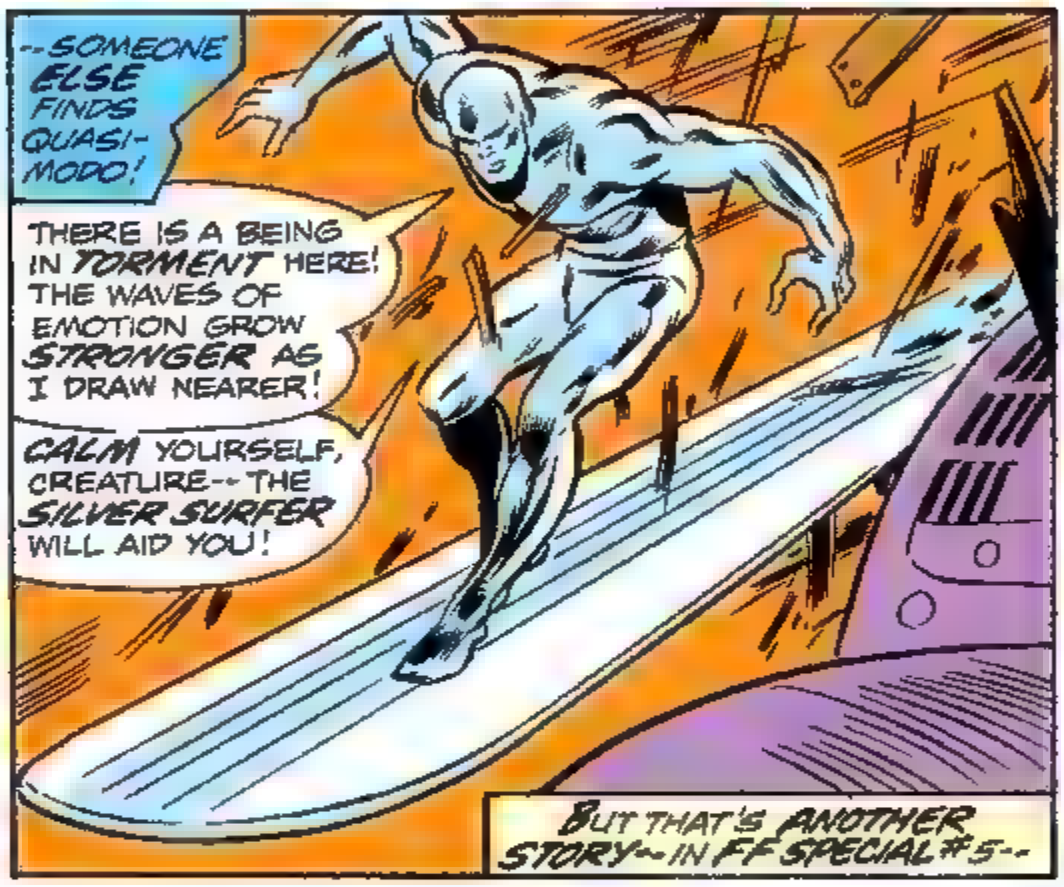




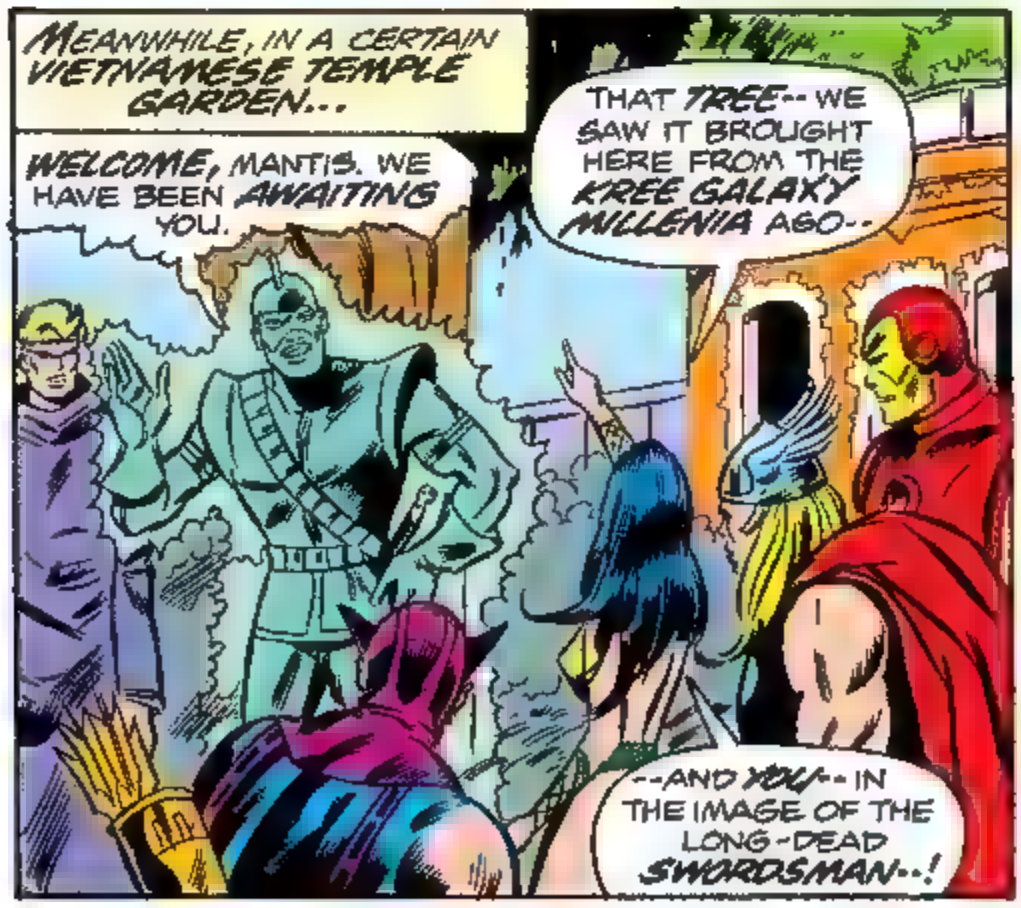
THERE MUST BE SOMEONE WHO OWES ME HIS LIFE--
--SO THAT I MAY HAVE A TRUST-WORTHY SERVANT!
THEN, TAKE ME! I HAVE NO LIFE AS A SENTIENT MACHINE!
NO!


I CAME FOR--WAIT! MY AUDIAL RECEPTORS DETECT A SOUND--COMING RAPIDLY THIS WAY!
THERE IS NO NEED TO TARRY! I HAVE BUT TO BLAST YOUR FACE-SCREEN WITH MY HYPNO-BEAM--

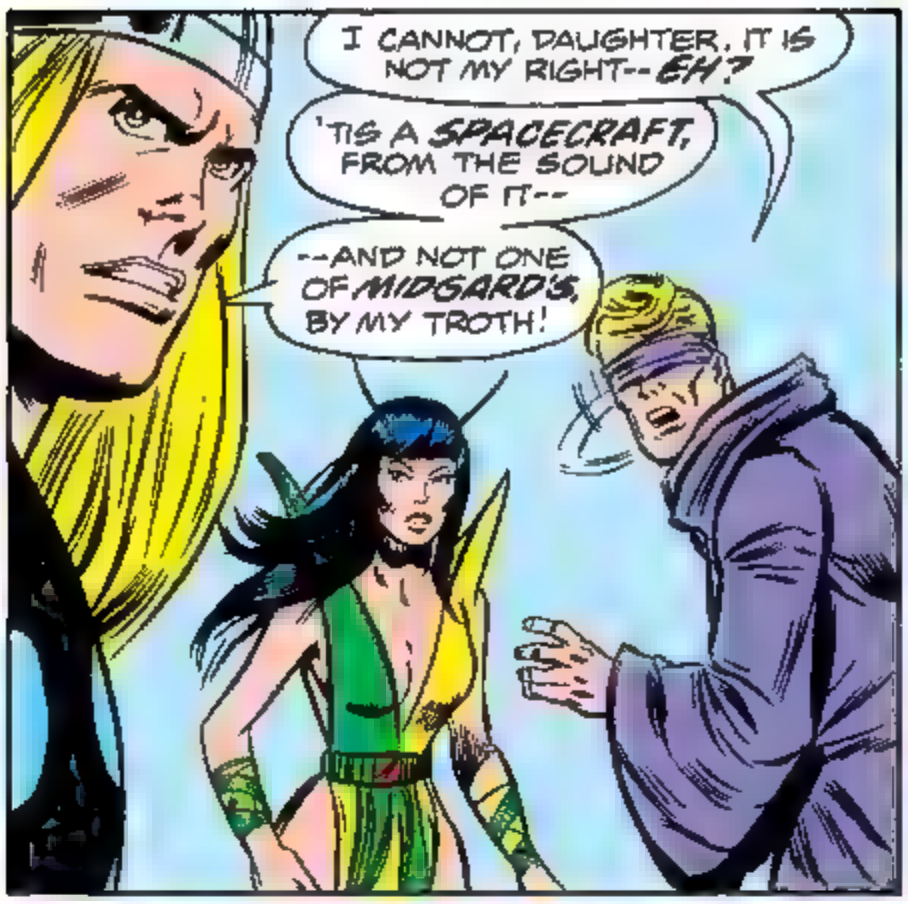

--AND YOU WOULD FIND THAT BEING SENTIENT ONLY ALLOWS YOU TO BE AFFECTED BY IT--IF YOU COULD REMEMBER ANY OF THIS NOW.
THE SOUND COMES CLOSER! I MUST HURRY!
AND MERE SECONDS AFTER ULTRON-5 DEPARTS WITH HIS PRIZE--

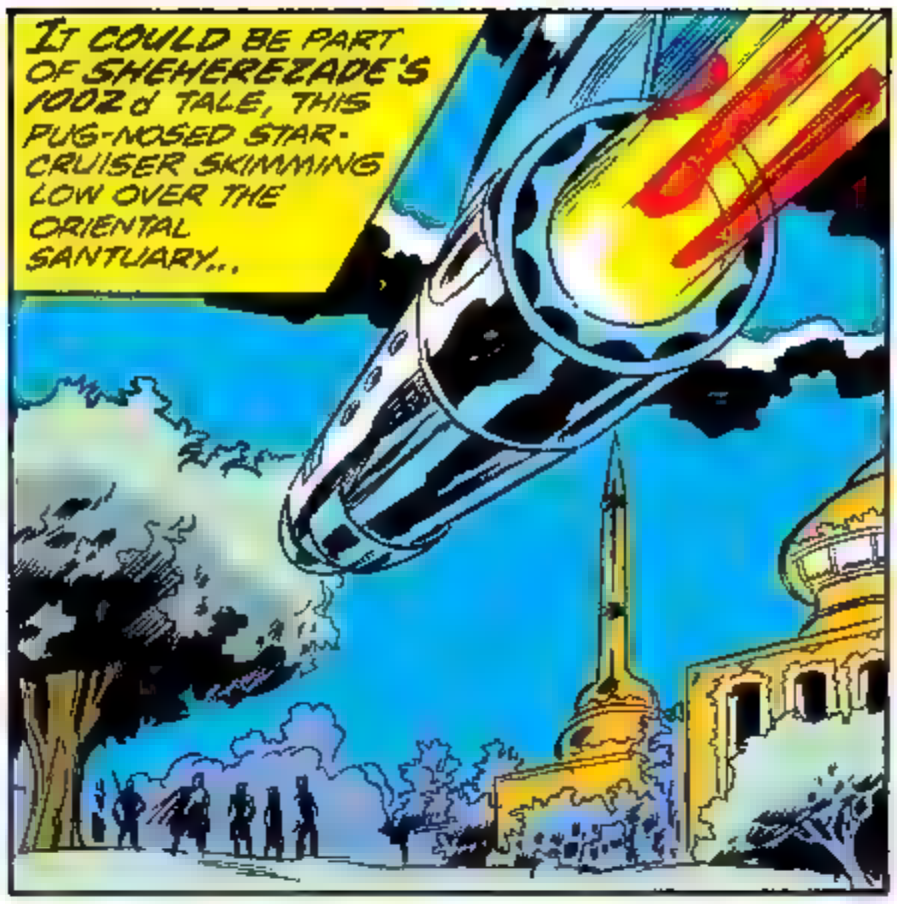

--SOMEONE ELSE FINDS QUASI-MODO!
THERE IS A BEING IN TORMENT HERE! THE WAVES OF EMOTION GROW STRONGER AS I DRAW NEARER!
CALM YOURSELF, CREATURE--THE SILVER SURFER WILL AID YOU!
BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY--IN FF SPECIAL #5--

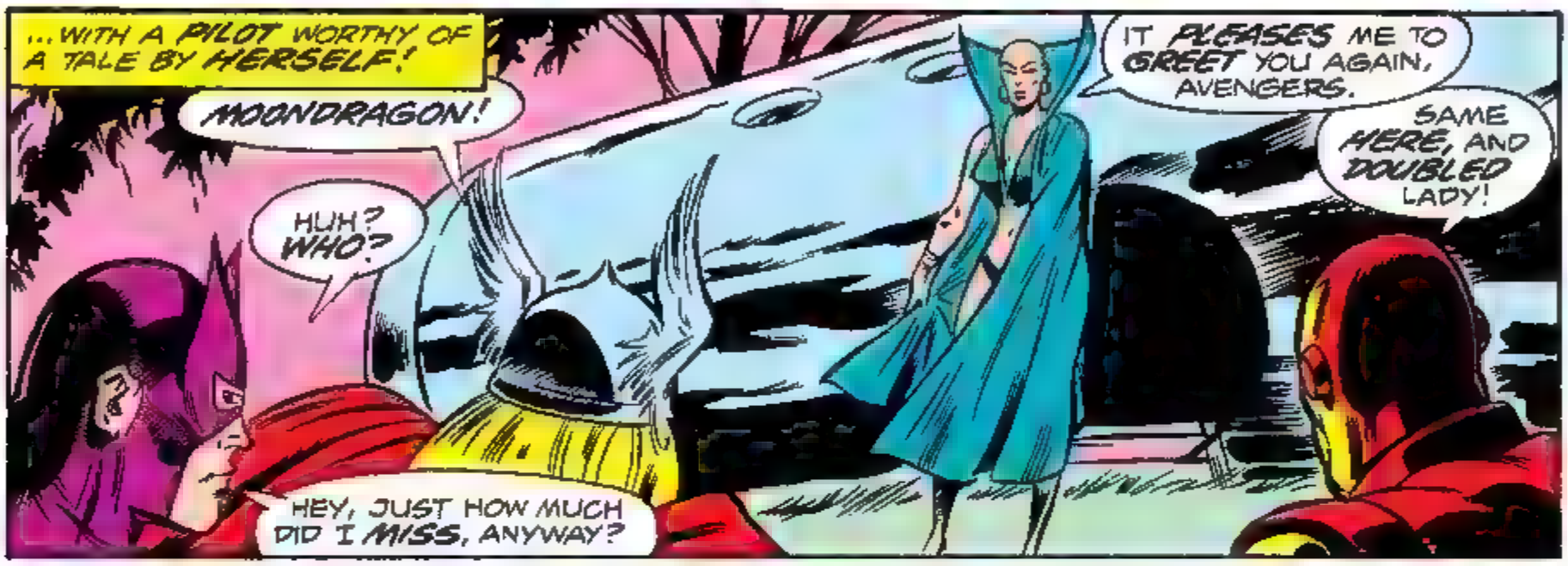
--AND THIS IS AVENGERS #135.
INCREDIBLE.
IN ONE YEAR, VISION, YOU WILL BE BORN.
THAT YEAR WILL BE NO LESS OUTRÉ!

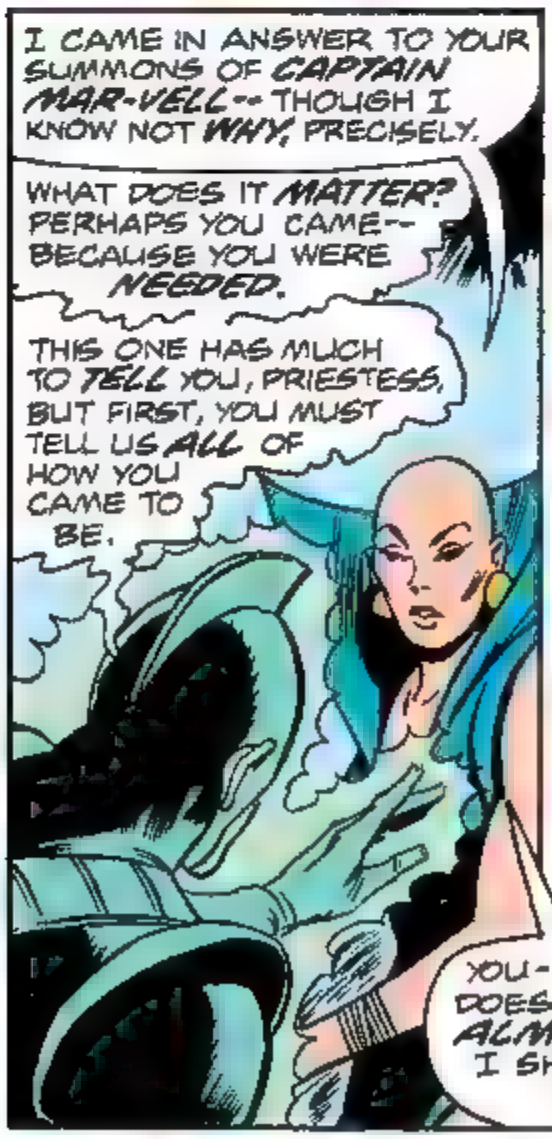

MEANWHILE, IN A CERTAIN VIETNAMESE TEMPLE GARDEN...
WELCOME, MANTIS. WE HAVE BEEN AWAITING YOU.
THAT TREE--WE SAW IT BROUGHT HERE FROM THE KREE GALAXY MILLENIA AGO--
--AND YOU--IN THE IMAGE OF THE LONG-DEAD SWORDSMAN--!

ALL IN GOOD TIME, MANTIS. I HAVE PROMISED YOU--
--TODAY WILL SEE THE COMING OF THE CELESTIAL MADONNA!
LIBRA! YOU HAVE CLAIMED TO BE THIS ONE'S FATHER!
YOU MUST TELL HER WHAT THIS MEANS!

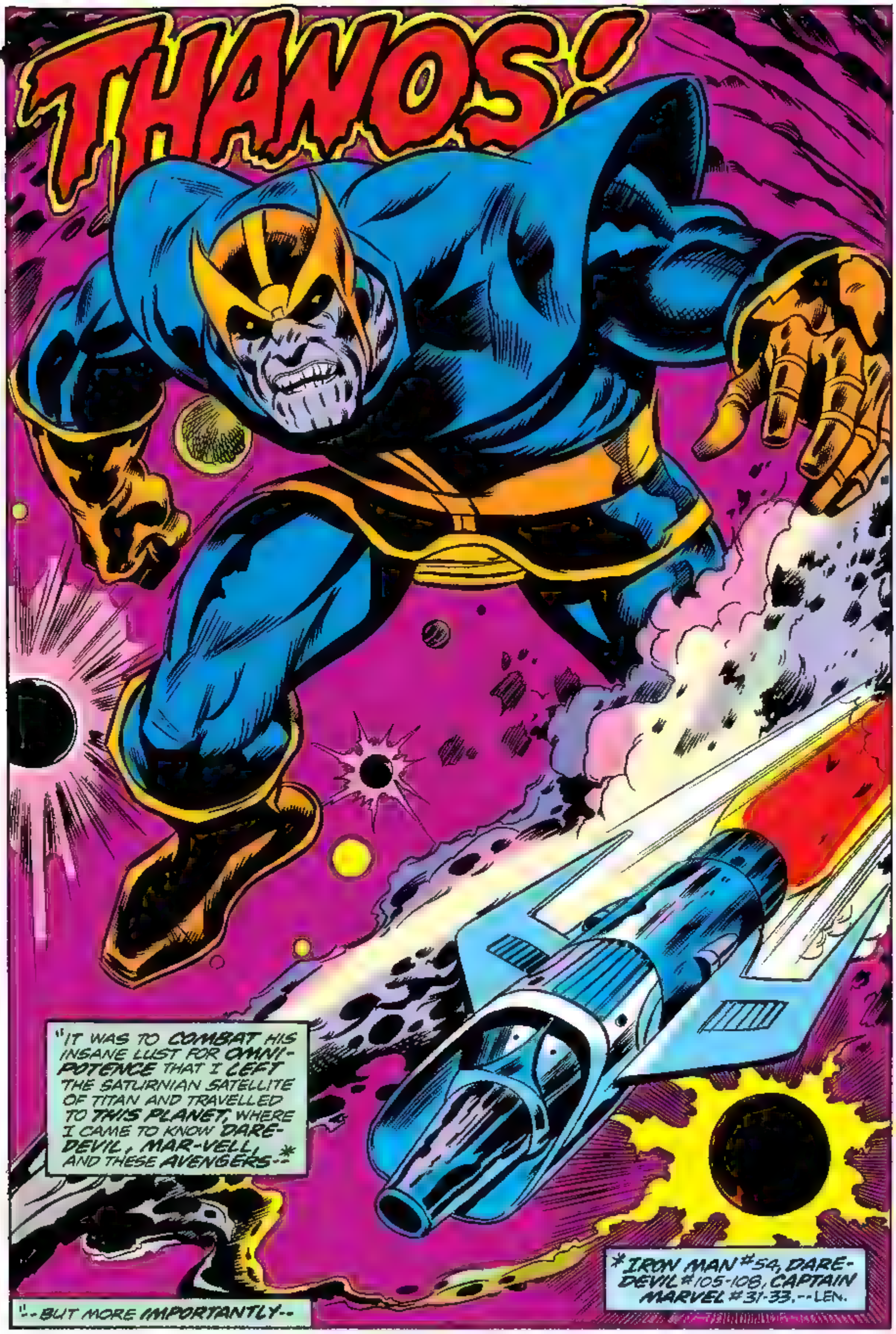

I CANNOT, DAUGHTER, IT IS NOT MY RIGHT-- EH?
'TIS A SPACECRAFT, FROM THE SOUND OF IT--
--AND NOT ONE OF MIDGARD'S, BY MY TROTH!


IT COULD BE PART OF SHEHEREZADE'S 1002d TALE, THIS PUG-NOSED STAR-CRUISER SKIMMING LOW OVER THE ORIENTAL SANTUARY...


...WITH A PILOT WORTHY OF A TALE BY HERSELF!
MOONDRAGON!
HUH? WHO?
HEY, JUST HOW MUCH DID I MISS, ANYWAY?
IT PLEASES ME TO GREET YOU AGAIN, AVENGERS.
SAME HERE, AND DOUBLED LADY!


I CAME IN ANSWER TO YOUR SUMMONS OF CAPTAIN MAR-VELL-- THOUGH I KNOW NOT WHY, PRECISELY.
WHAT DOES IT MATTER? PERHAPS YOU CAME-- BECAUSE YOU WERE NEEDED.
THIS ONE HAS MUCH TO TELL YOU, PRIESTESS, BUT FIRST, YOU MUST TELL US ALL OF HOW YOU CAME TO BE.

...YET I ALSO FEEL I SHOULD TRUST YOU, AND SIMPLY DO AS YOU SAY.
HARKEN, THEN, TO A TALE OF TWO WORLDS...
...AND THE MAN-GOD WHO FORCED ME TO TREAD THEM--
YOU-- SPEAK AS DOES MANTIS. I ALMOST FEEL I SHOULD KNOW WHY...


THANOS!
"IT WAS TO COMBAT HIS INSANE LUST FOR OMNI-POTENCE THAT I LEFT THE SATURNIAN SATELLITE OF TITAN AND TRAVELLED TO THIS PLANET, WHERE I CAME TO KNOW DARE-DEVIL, MAR-VELL, * AND THESE AVENGERS--
--BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY--
*IRON MAN #54, DARE-DEVIL #105-108, CAPTAIN MARVEL #31-33.--LEN.

"--IT WAS THANOS WHO BLASTED MY PARENTS' AUTOMOBILE AS WE DROVE THROUGH THE NEVADA DESERT ONE STARRY NIGHT TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO.

"YES, I WAS BORN ON EARTH, AND MY GIVEN NAME WAS HEATHER DOUGLAS--

"--BEFORE THANOS DECIDED TO ELIMINATE ANY POSSIBLE WITNESSES TO HIS FIRST SCOUTING MISSION HERE.

"HE THOUGHT US ALL DEAD--

"--BUT HE WAS WRONG!

"I CRAWLED FROM THE WRECKAGE, AND STAGGERED DAZED OUT INTO THE DESERT WASTE... WHERE I WOULD HAVE SURELY DIED OF EXPOSURE, BUT FOR SOMEONE I ASSUMED TO BE AN ANGEL.

"IN FACT, IT WAS MENTOR, RULER OF TITAN...

"...WHO HAD FOLLOWED HIS REBELLIOUS SON TO EARTH.

"SINCE I BELIEVED HIM AN ANGEL, HOWEVER, I BEGGED HIM TO TAKE ME TO HEAVEN--

"--WHEREUPON, HE TOOK ME SOMEPLACE EVEN BETTER!

"PAST THE MOON AND MARS WE SOARED, LEAVING MY EARTH-LIFE BEHIND...

"...UNTIL WE CAME TO HIS PLANET...

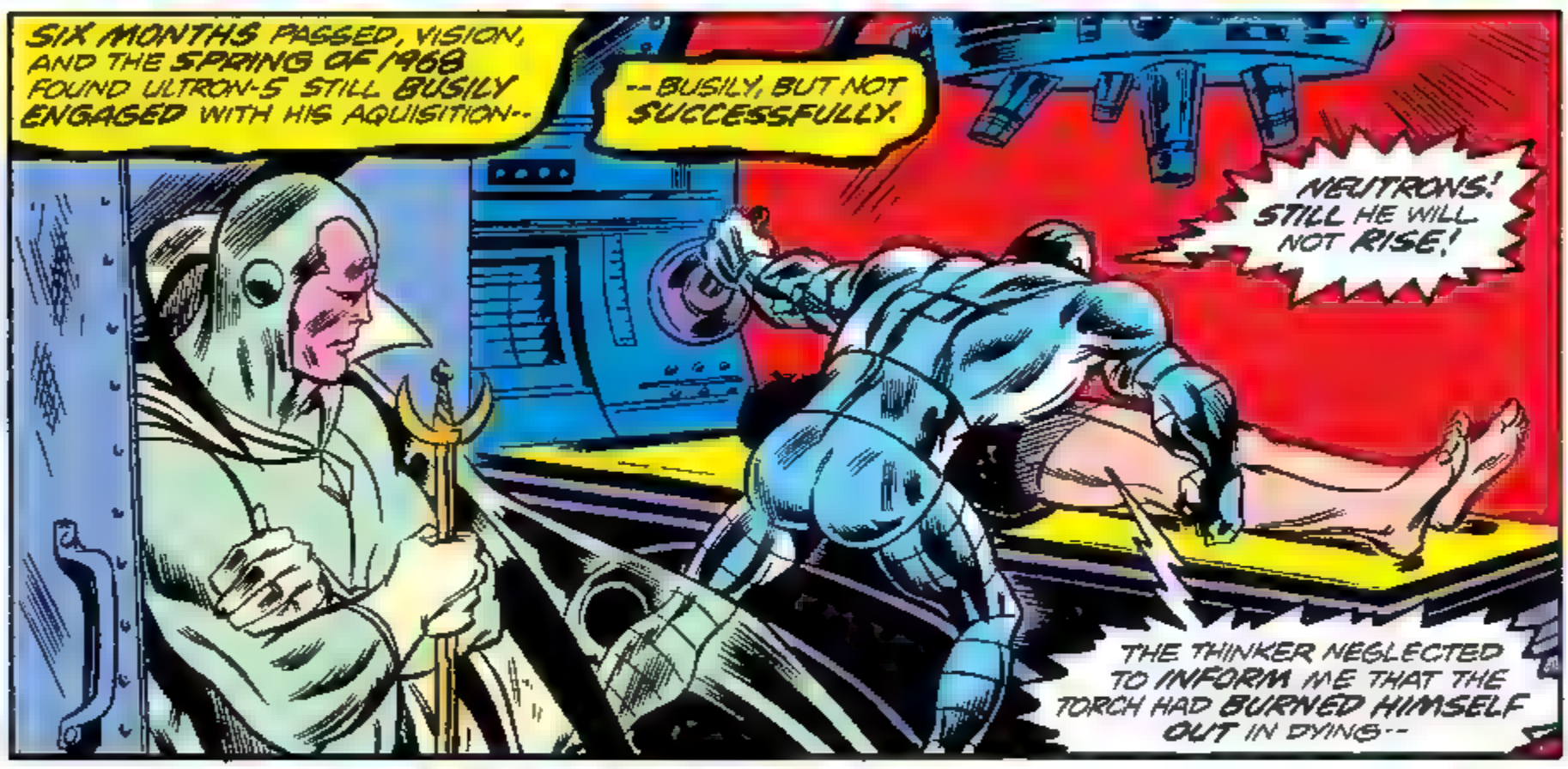
"...AND I WAS PLACED WITHIN THE SHAO-LOM MONASTERY, WHERE I LEARNED THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF BODY AND SOUL. I GREW TO BE A PRIESTESS, AN ATHLETE, AND A GENETICIST--

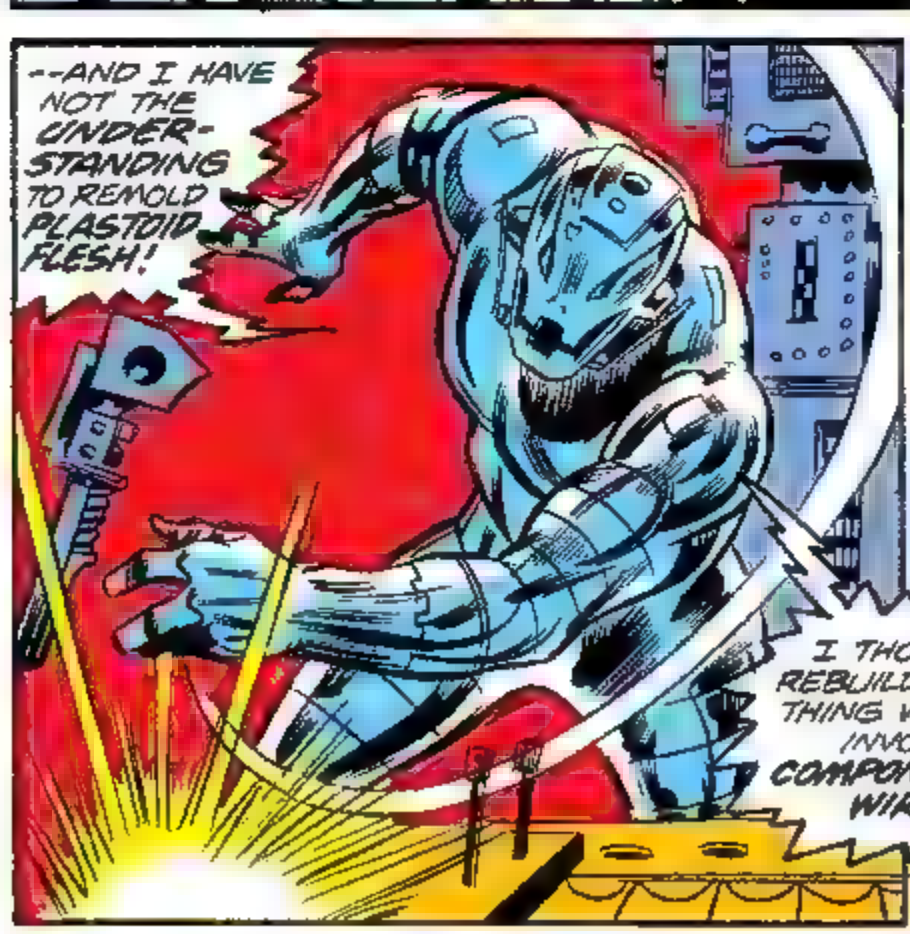
"--AND I TOOK THE TITLE MOONDRAGON."

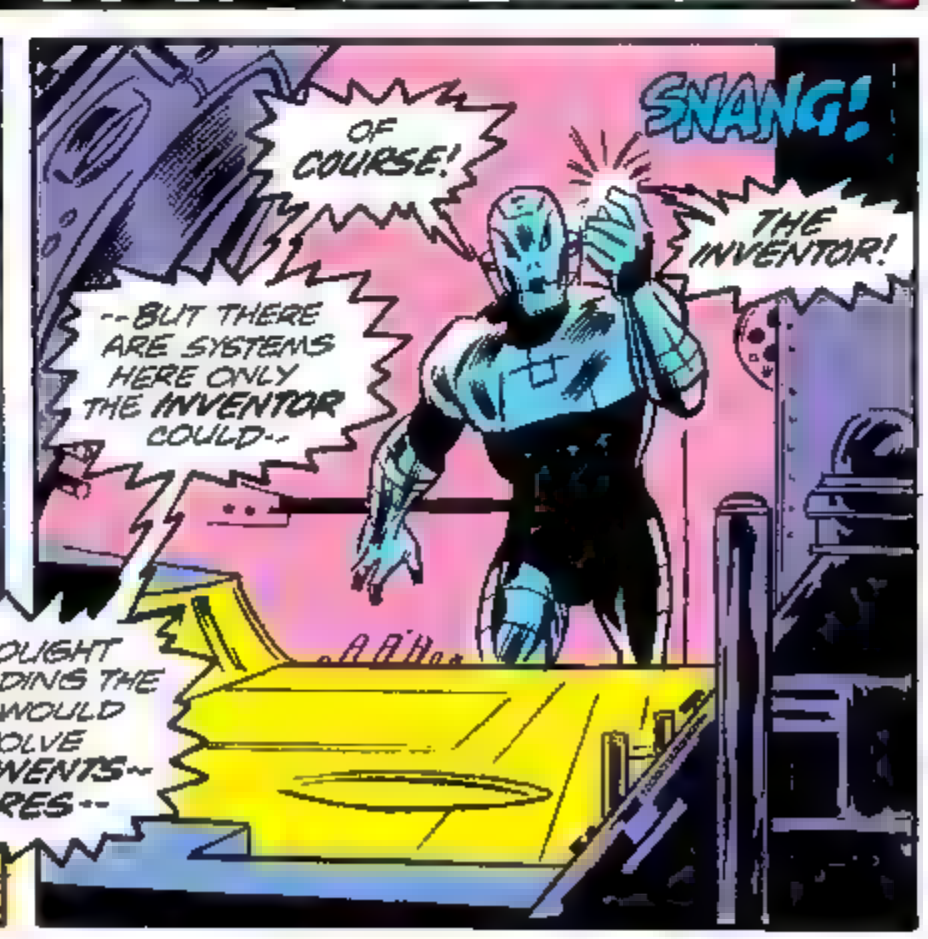
BUT THAT--THAT IS, IN MANY RESPECTS, IDENTICAL TO THE TALE OF THIS ONE'S EARLIEST DAYS--
--AT LEAST, AS RELATED BY LIBRA.

PERHAPS THAT IS...
...BECAUSE SHE WAS NEEDED.

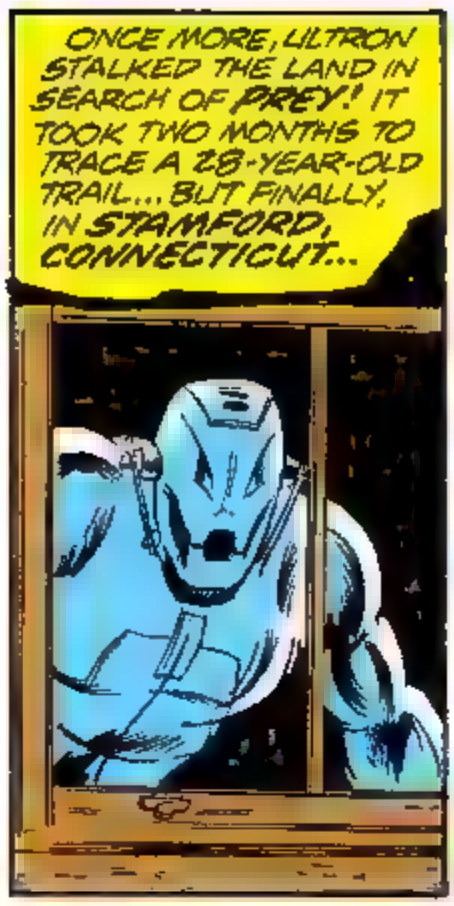
SILENCE...

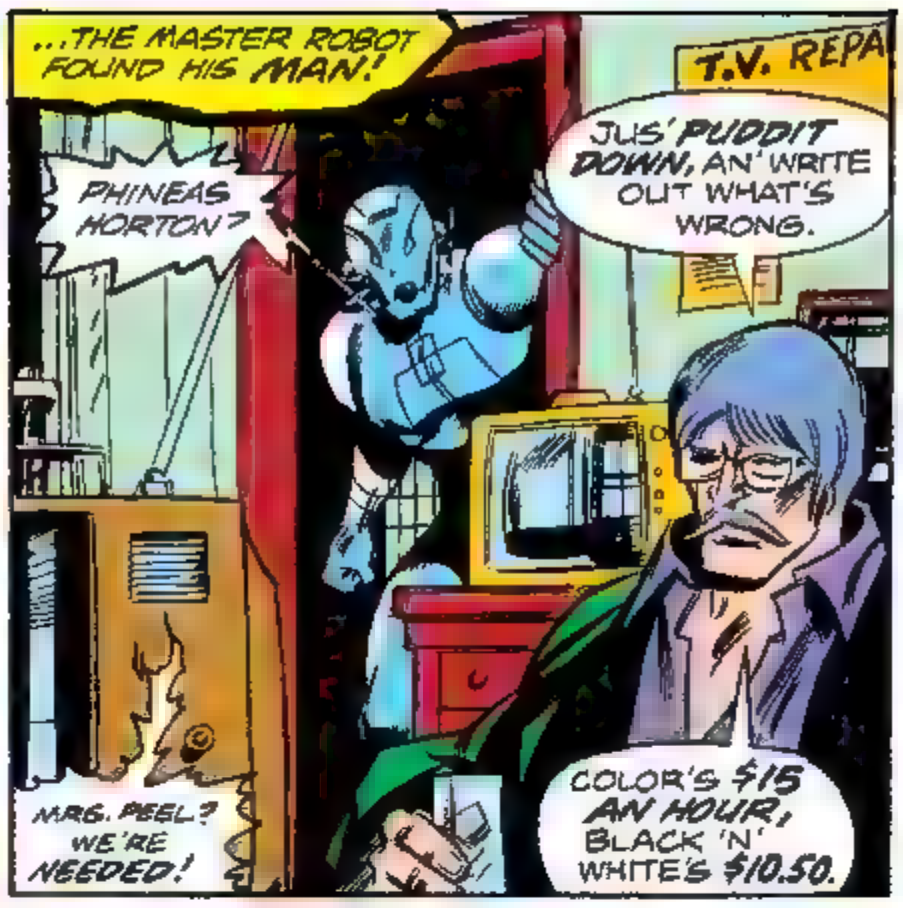

SIX MONTHS PASSED, VISION, AND THE SPRING OF 1968 FOUND ULTRON-5 STILL BUSILY ENGAGED WITH HIS AQUISITION--
--BUSILY, BUT NOT SUCCESSFULLY.
NEUTRONS! STILL HE WILL NOT RISE!
THE THINKER NEGLECTED TO INFORM ME THAT THE TORCH HAD BURNED HIMSELF OUT IN DYING--

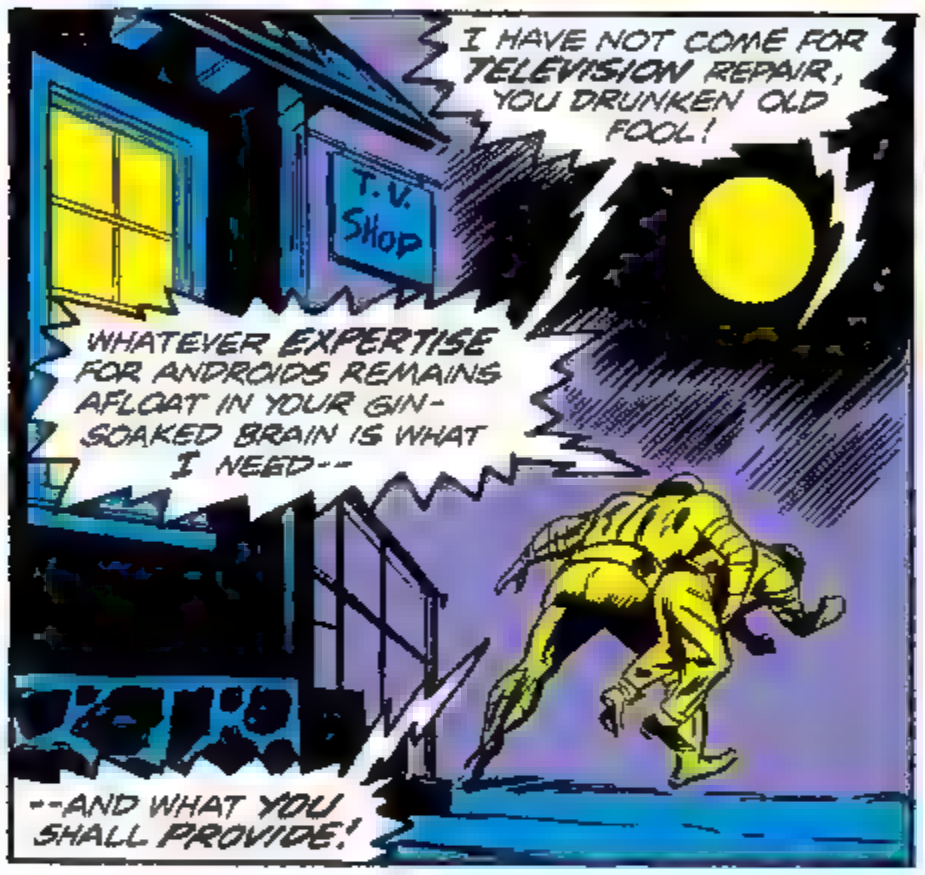

--AND I HAVE NOT THE UNDER-STANDING TO REMOLD PLASTOID FLESH!
I THOUGHT REBUILDING THE THING WOULD INVOLVE COMPONENTS--WIRES--

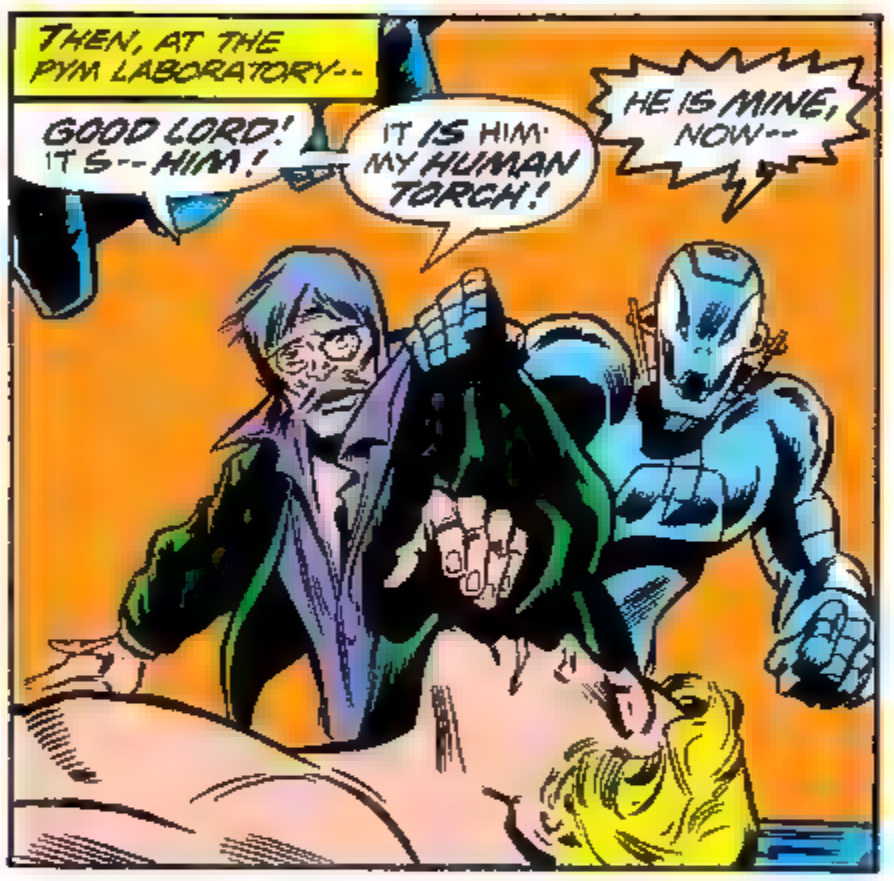

SNANG!
OF COURSE!
THE INVENTOR!
--BUT THERE ARE SYSTEMS HERE ONLY THE INVENTOR COULD--

NOW YOU UNDERSTAND WHY THE STORY OF YOUR ORIGIN HAD TO BEGIN WITH THE TORCH'S ORIGIN. ONE MAN WAS COMMON TO BOTH--
--PROFESSOR PHINEAS T. HORTON!


ONCE MORE, ULTRON STALKED THE LAND IN SEARCH OF PREY! IT TOOK TWO MONTHS TO TRACE A 28-YEAR-OLD TRAIL... BUT FINALLY, IN STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT...


...THE MASTER ROBOT FOUND HIS MAN!
T.V. REPA
PHINEAS HORTON?
JUS' PUDDIT DOWN, AN' WRITE OUT WHAT'S WRONG.
MRS. PEEL? WE'RE NEEDED!
COLOR'S $15 AN HOUR, BLACK 'N' WHITE'S $10.50.


I HAVE NOT COME FOR TELEVISION REPAIR, YOU DRUNKEN OLD FOOL!
T.V. SHOP
WHATEVER EXPERTISE FOR ANDROIDS REMAINS AFLOAT IN YOUR GIN-SOAKED BRAIN IS WHAT I NEED--
--AND WHAT YOU SHALL PROVIDE!

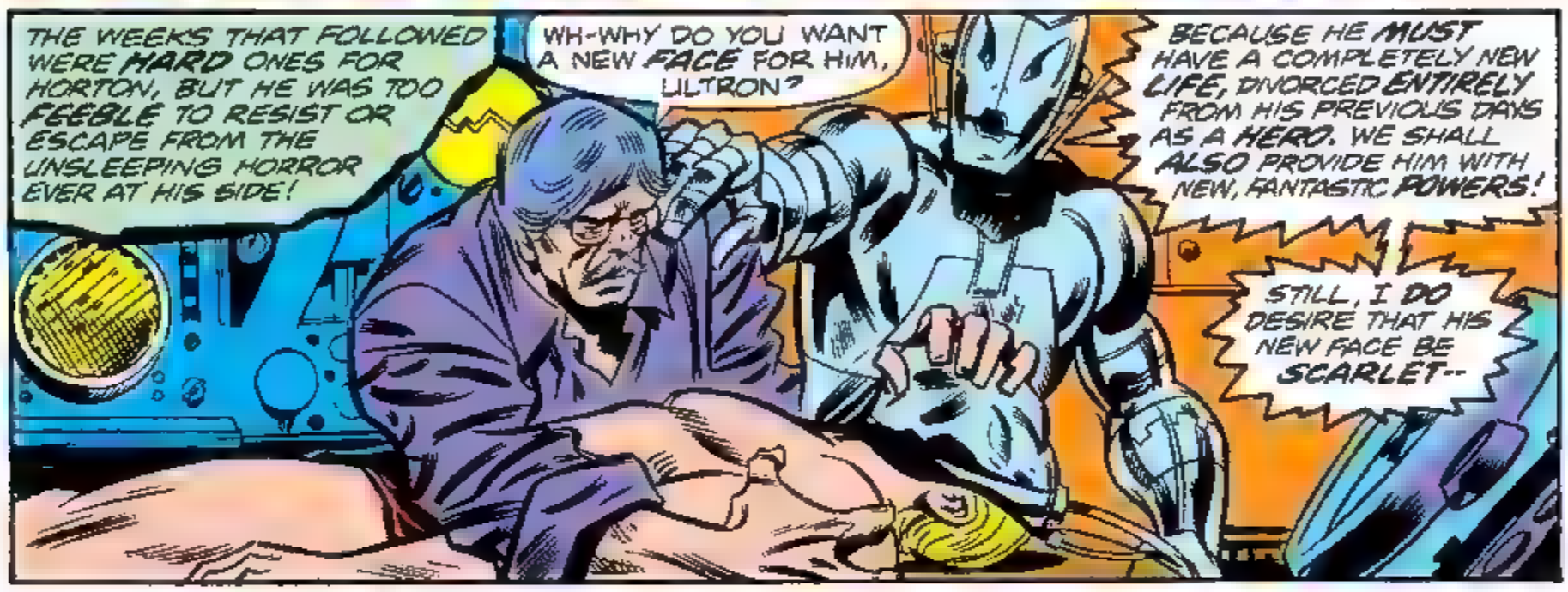

THEN, AT THE PYM LABORATORY--
GOOD LORD! IT'S--HIM!
IT IS HIM! MY HUMAN TORCH!
HE IS MINE, NOW--

--AND ONCE YOU ASSIST ME IN BRINGING HIM BACK TO LIFE, HE WILL BE MINE FOR ALL ETERNITY!
NO! YOU CAN'T ASK THAT OF ME!
WHEN I CREATED HIM, I WAS A RISING SCIENTIST. I THOUGHT HE'D BE MY CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT-- AND MY MEAL-TICKET--
--BUT MY COLLEAGUES FEARED HIM-- HOUNDED ME TO DESTROY HIM--

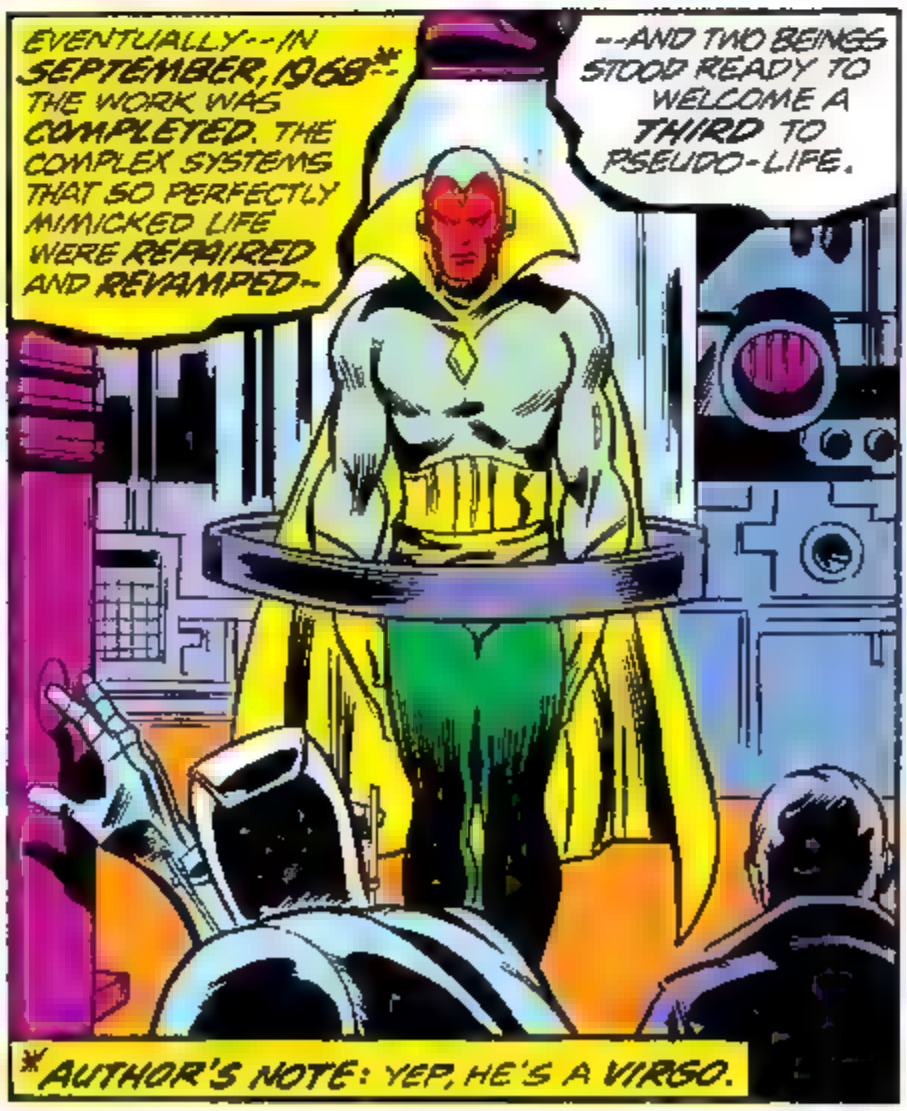
--AND WHEN HE ESCAPED, I WAS OSTRACIZED BY THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY-- AND HE NEVER, EVER RETURNED TO ME!
I TURNED TO REPAIR WORK TO GET BY. I DRANK LIKE SO MANY, TO FORGET. FOR THREE DECADES, THAT'S KEPT ME CONTENT.
HORTON--
DON'T MAKE ME FACE HIM AGAIN--NOT NOW, WHEN I'M SO OLD!

SILENCE!
THUNK!

NOW GET TO WORK, MY DECADENT GEPETTO--
--GET TO WORK AND GIVE ME A PINOCCHIO!


THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED WERE HARD ONES FOR HORTON, BUT HE WAS TOO FEEBLE TO RESIST OR ESCAPE FROM THE UNSLEEPING HORROR EVER AT HIS SIDE!
WH-WHY DO YOU WANT A NEW FACE FOR HIM, ULTRON?
BECAUSE HE MUST HAVE A COMPLETELY NEW LIFE, DIVORCED ENTIRELY FROM HIS PREVIOUS DAYS AS A HERO. WE SHALL ALSO PROVIDE HIM WITH NEW, FANTASTIC POWERS!
STILL, I DO DESIRE THAT HIS NEW FACE BE SCARLET--

--FOR THOUGH HE WILL REMAIN IGNORANT--
--I SHALL BE REMINDED OF HIS PAST EVERY TIME I LOOK UPON HIS FLAME-HUED VISAGE!
IT IS THE MOST SUBTLE OF JESTS PROFESSOR! WHY DO YOU NOT LAUGH?


EVENTUALLY--IN SEPTEMBER, 1968*-- THE WORK WAS COMPLETED. THE COMPLEX SYSTEMS THAT SO PERFECTLY MIMICKED LIFE WERE REPAIRED AND REVAMPED--
--AND TWO BEINGS STOOD READY TO WELCOME A THIRD TO PSEUDO-LIFE.
*AUTHOR'S NOTE: YEP, HE'S A VIRGO.

AND EVEN AS THE VISION STRAINS FOR A CLOSER LOOK, TWO OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE ARE TRANSPIRING.

YON SHIMMER-- APPEARING FROM THE EMPTY ETHER!

I DO RECOGNIZE IT, FOR WE HAVE ALL ESPIED IT ERE NOW! 'TIS THE MARK OF TIME-TRAVEL--

--THE MARK OF IMMORTUS!

SALUTATIONS! I SEE I AM IN TIME-- AS IT WERE.

IF YOU SAY SO. YOU'RE CERTAINLY WELCOME--

--BUT WHAT DID YOU BRING WITH YOU?

"WHEN THE BOX OPENS...THEN WILL YOU LEARN, YOUNG MAN."

IT'S SO SILENT IN THERE--

--EVER SINCE MS. WANDA RE-ENTERED AFTER ATTACKING MS. MOON-DRAGON.* IT'S AS IF-- MISS HARKNESS HAS SEALED THEM AWAY FOR GOOD THIS TIME!

*LAST ISH, --L.

I DON'T BELIEVE I'M TOO PRESUMPTUOUS TO ESSAY AN ANCIENT SERVANT'S GAMBIT, AND OFFER THEM FOOD--

HA HA HA HA

THAT LAUGH--!

THAT'S A MALE VOICE--A MALEVOLENT VOICE--

--ONE THAT SHOULD NOT BE IN THERE!

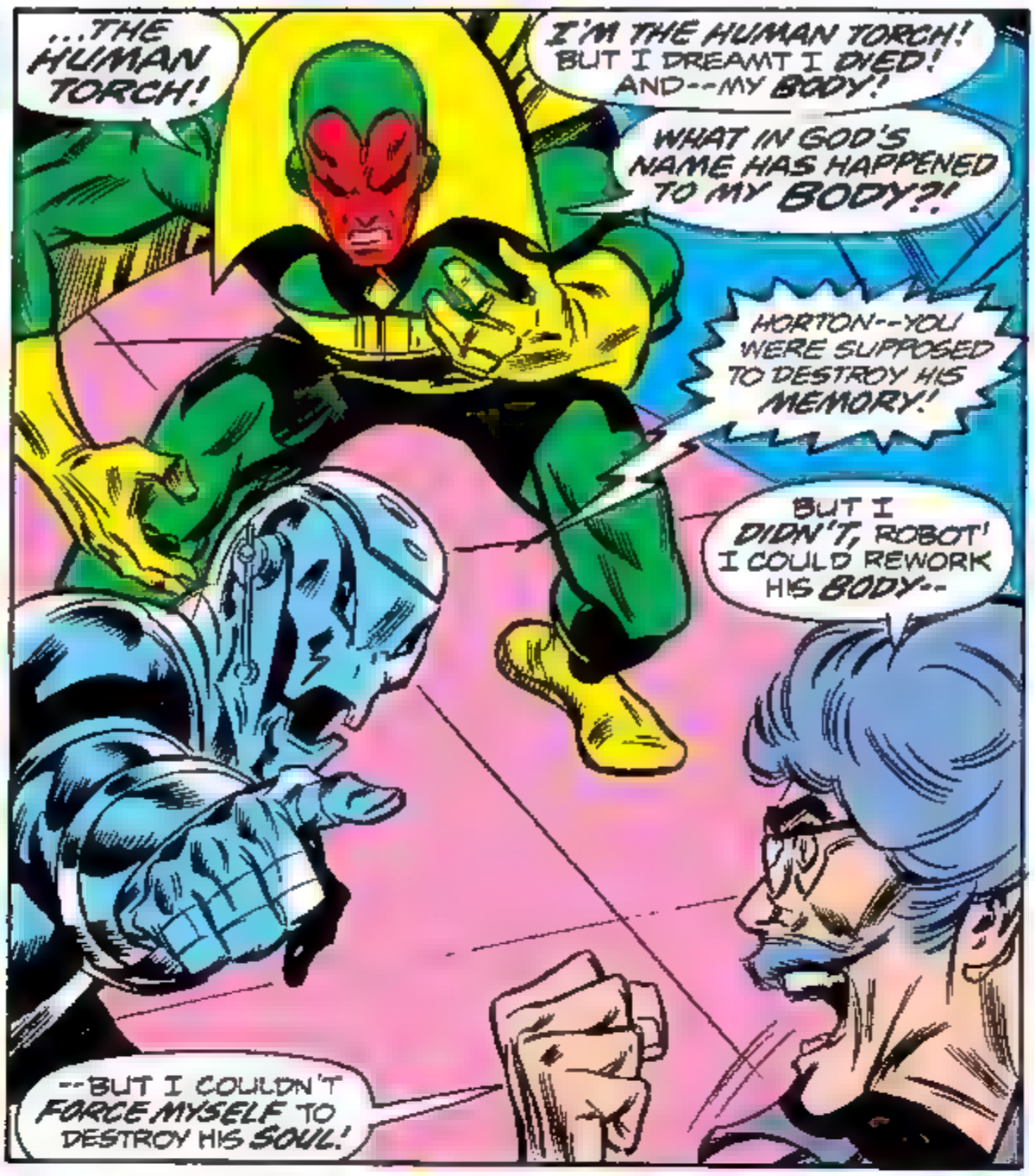
I'LL BREAK IN, IF I MUS--

YET TO JARVIS'S AMAZEMENT, THE HEAVY DOOR IS NO LONGER LOCKED! IT FLIES WIDE WITH HIS IMPACT...

...REVEALING A DARK AND DRAFTY ROOM...

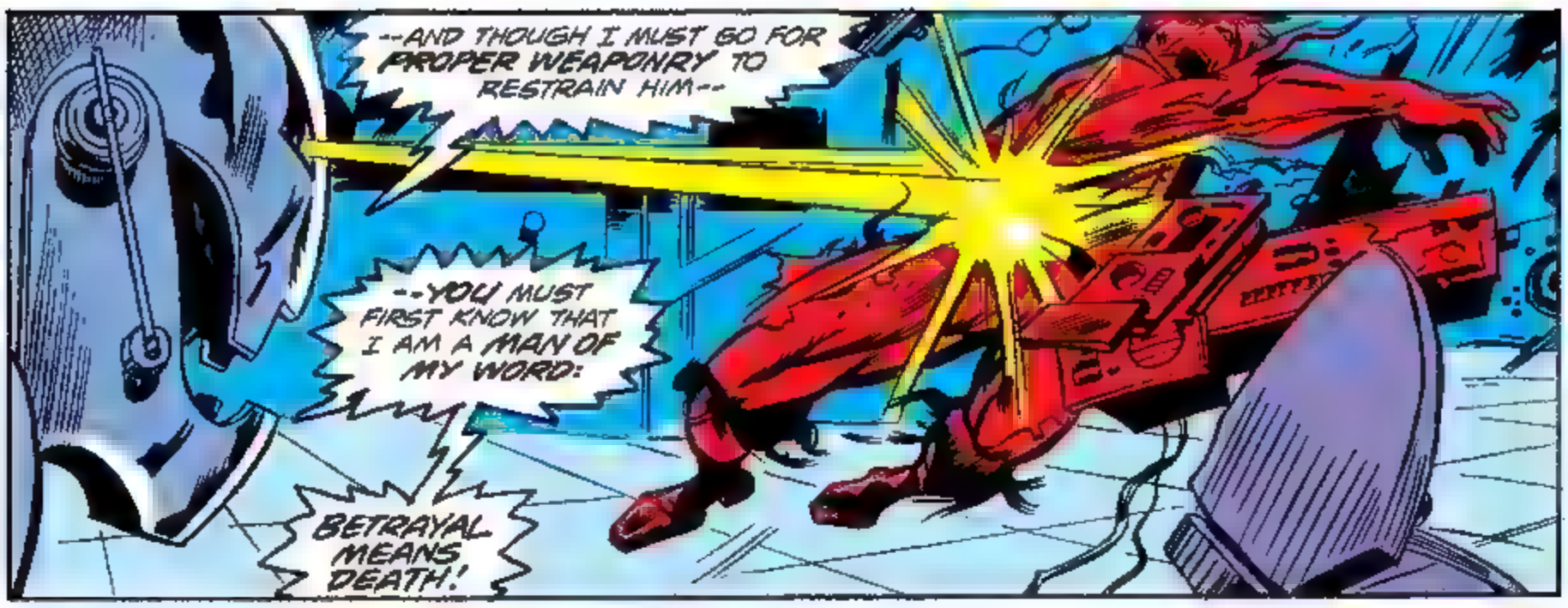
...A DARK AND DESERTED ROOM...!

BUT NOW A BUTTON HAS BEEN PUSHED! NOW A HUM HAS FILLED THE AIR, AND FILLED THE INTERIOR OF A SYNTHETIC MAN!
NOW THE LAMBIENT FIRES SMOLDER FOR THE FIRST TIME BENEATH THE BROW OF...

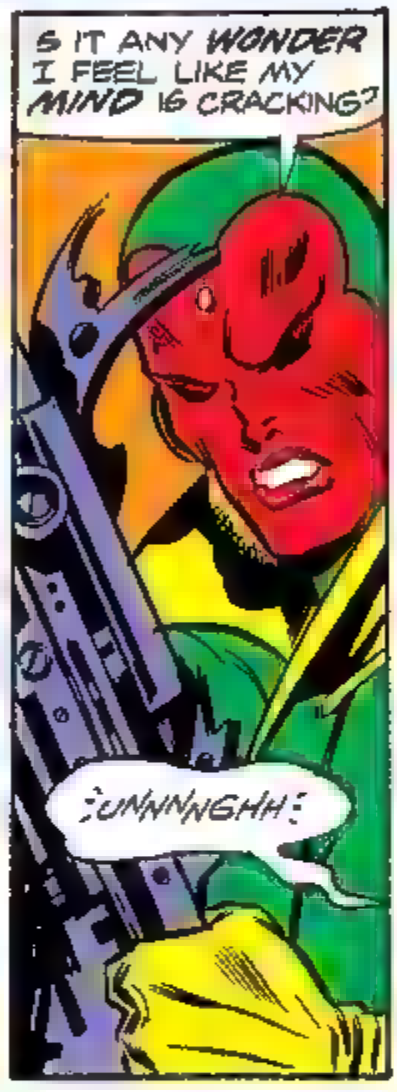

...THE HUMAN TORCH!
I'M THE HUMAN TORCH! BUT I DREAMT I DIED! AND--MY BODY!
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME HAS HAPPENED TO MY BODY?!
HORTON--YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DESTROY HIS MEMORY!
BUT I DIDN'T, ROBOT! I COULD REWORK HIS BODY--
--BUT I COULDN'T FORCE MYSELF TO DESTROY HIS SOUL!

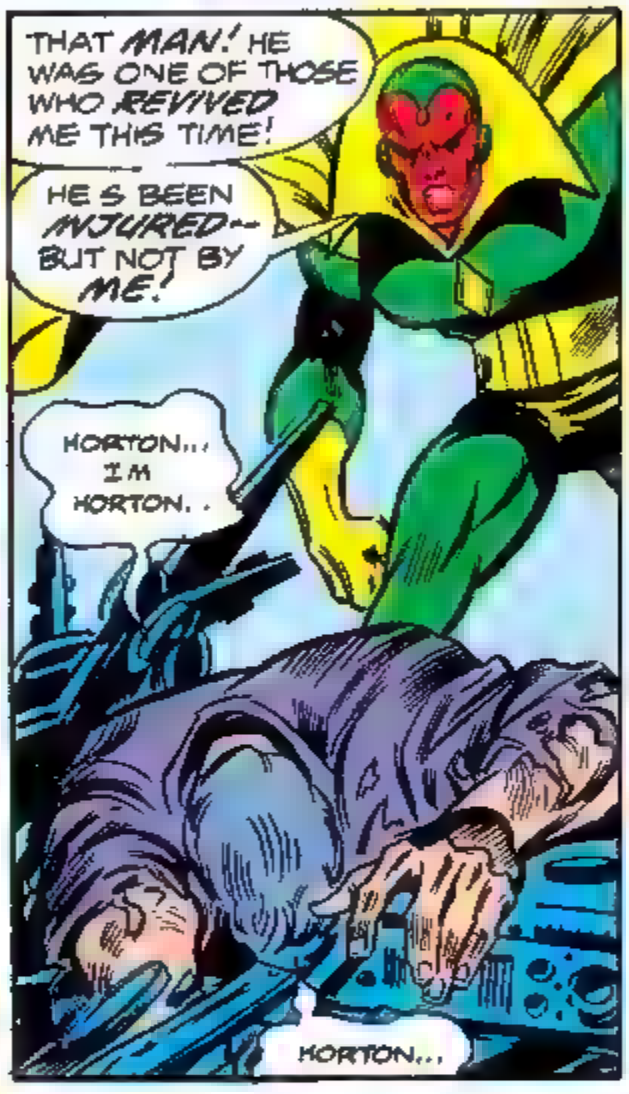
I CONCEIVED HIM--MYSELF, WITH NO ONE'S AID! HE CAME TO LIFE UNDER MY HANDS..
--AND THOUGH I HAD ONLY THE BASEST OF MOTIVES, I FIND I POURED WHAT LITTLE SOUL I POSSESSED INTO HIM!
I HATED MYSELF WHEN I REALIZED WHAT A HYPOCRITE I'D BEEN--LET OTHERS HATE ME~

--BUT I LOVE HIM!
HE'S THE HIGH POINT OF ALL MY DAYS ON EARTH!
BLAST YOU AND YOUR MAUDLIN HUMAN NOSTALGIA! YOUR TORCH IS RUNNING AMOK IN HIS CONFUSION--


--AND THOUGH I MUST GO FOR PROPER WEAPONRY TO RESTRAIN HIM--
--YOU MUST FIRST KNOW THAT I AM A MAN OF MY WORD:
BETRAYAL MEANS DEATH!

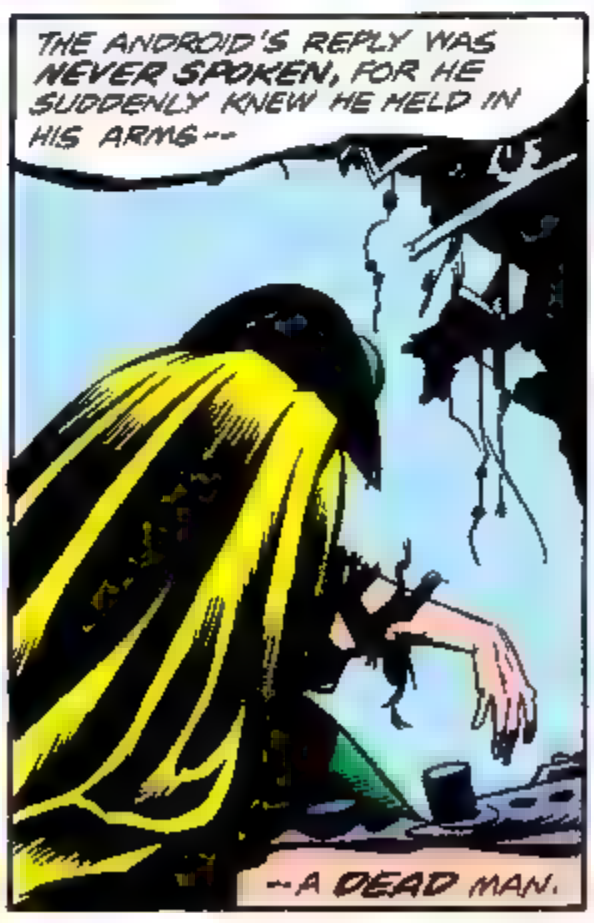
THE OLD MAN'S HEAVY STRIKING ON THE FLOOR WAS LOST IN THE DIN TO THE ANDROID'S AUDIAL RECEPTORS!
IS THIS HELL?
HAS MY PSEUDO-LIFE SO OFFENDED THE LORD THAT I'M DAMNED TO DIE AND BE REBORN TILL THE END OF TIME..
--AND NOW TO BE REBORN IN AN UN-FAMILIAR FORM?

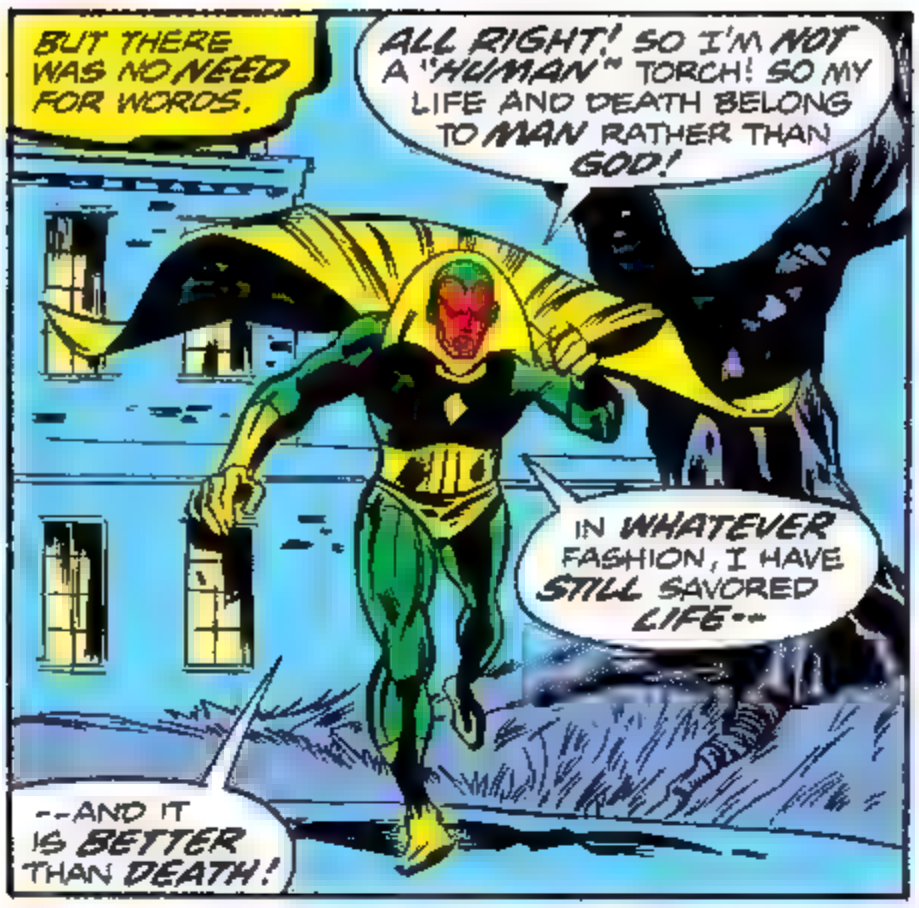

S IT ANY WONDER I FEEL LIKE MY MIND IS CRACKING?
:UNNNNGHH:


THAT MAN! HE WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO REVIVED ME THIS TIME!
HE S BEEN INJURED-- BUT NOT BY ME!
HORTON... I M HORTON..
HORTON...

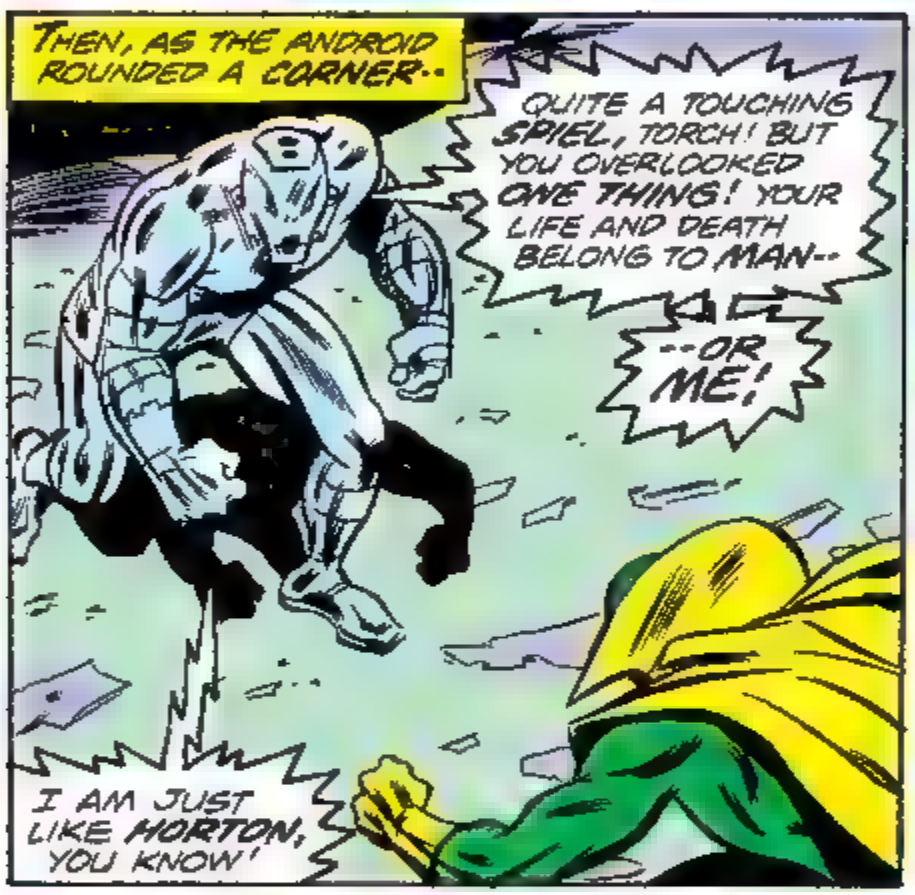
YOU CAN'T --
--BUT YOU ARE! YOU ARE HORTON!
MY TORCH, I WAS NOT A MAN FOR MARRIAGE-- YET I WANTED AN ISSUE, CREATION, SOME PART OF ME TO LIVE ON!
I THOUGHT OF YOU--

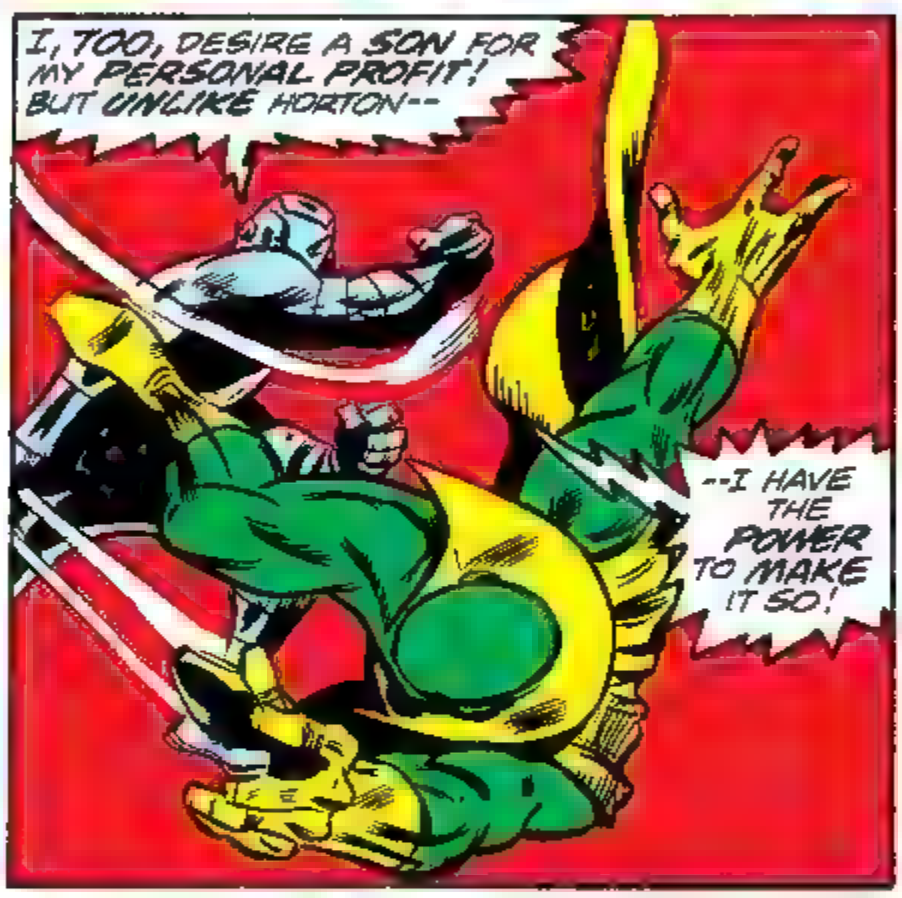
--AND THE THOUGHT GREW INTO A DREAM-- AND THAT DREAM ALMOST GREW INTO REALITY!
I BUILT YOU FLAWED-- JUST AS I WAS FLAWED--
--BUT I GAVE YOU LIFE.
TELL ME. WAS I... WRONG?


THE ANDROID'S REPLY WAS NEVER SPOKEN, FOR HE SUDDENLY KNEW HE HELD IN HIS ARMS--
--A DEAD MAN.

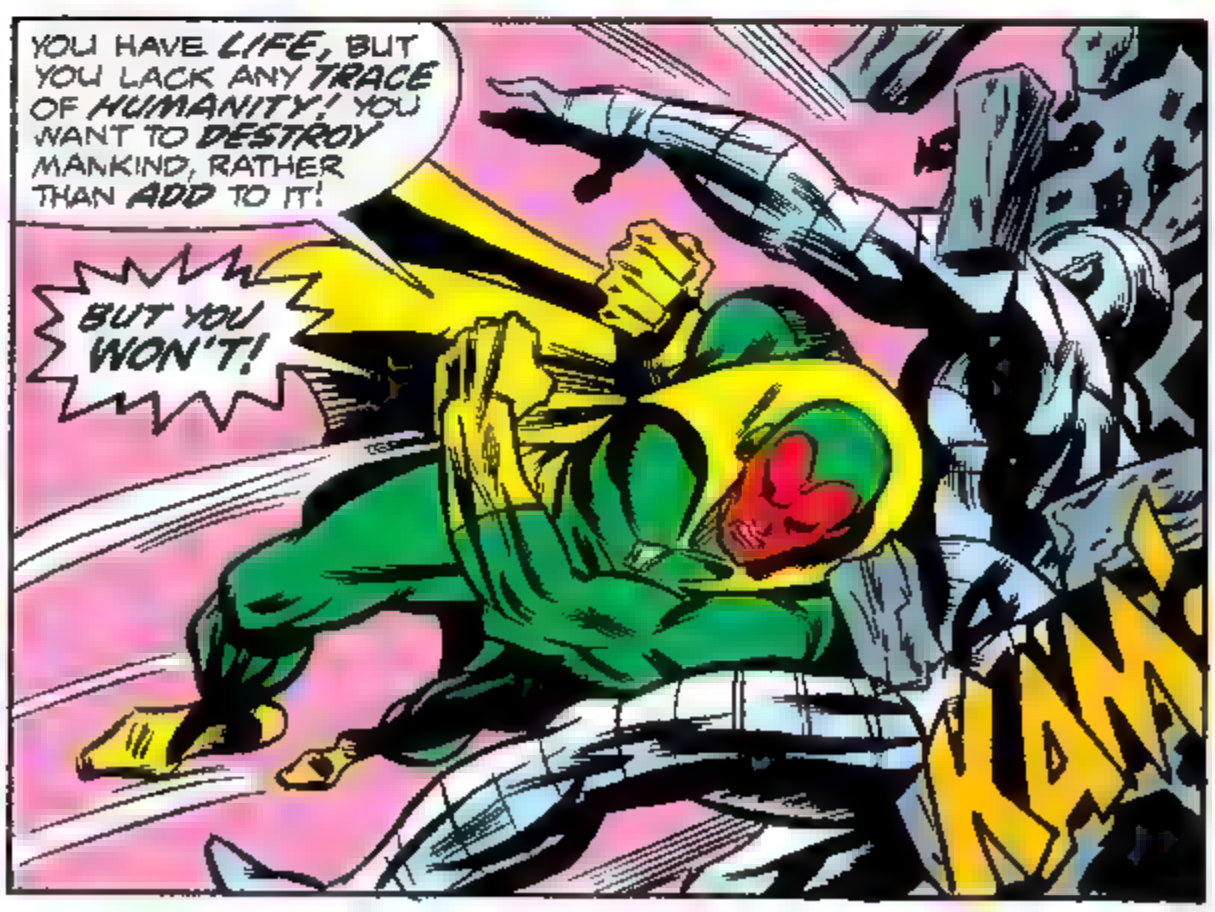

BUT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR WORDS.
ALL RIGHT! SO I'M NOT A "HUMAN" TORCH! SO MY LIFE AND DEATH BELONG TO MAN RATHER THAN GOD!
IN WHATEVER FASHION, I HAVE STILL SAVORED LIFE--
--AND IT IS BETTER THAN DEATH!

I HATED HORTON SINCE THE DAY I LEARNED HE HAD CREATED ME FOR PROFIT-- BUT TO ERR IS HUMAN--
--AND IF I COULD LEARN HUMANITY--
--I SHOOD HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE COULD, TOO!
SO LOOK OUT, ULTRON! WHEN I CATCH YOU--
--THE HUMAN TORCH WILL HAVE HIS REVENGE!


THEN, AS THE ANDROID ROUNDED A CORNER--
QUITE A TOUCHING SPIEL, TORCH! BUT YOU OVERLOOKED ONE THING! YOUR LIFE AND DEATH BELONG TO MAN--
--OR ME!
I AM JUST LIKE HORTON, YOU KNOW!

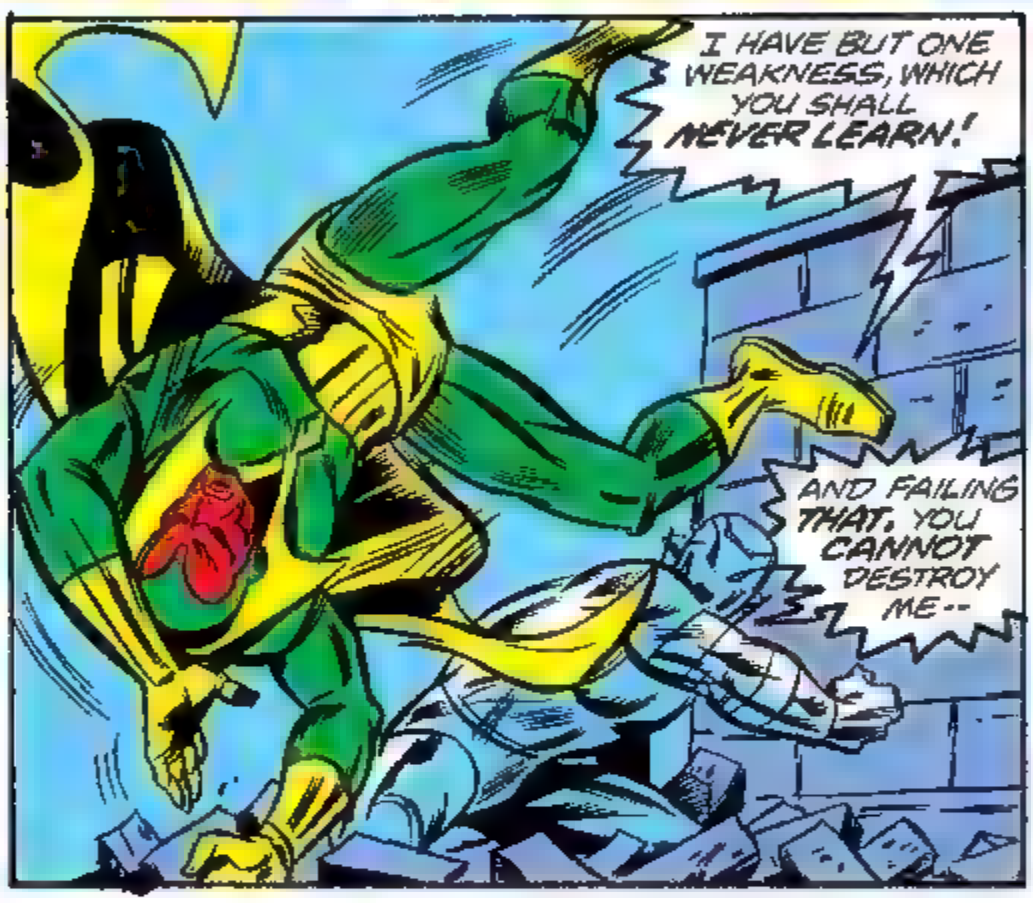

I, TOO, DESIRE A SON FOR MY PERSONAL PROFIT! BUT UNLIKE HORTON--
--I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE IT SO!

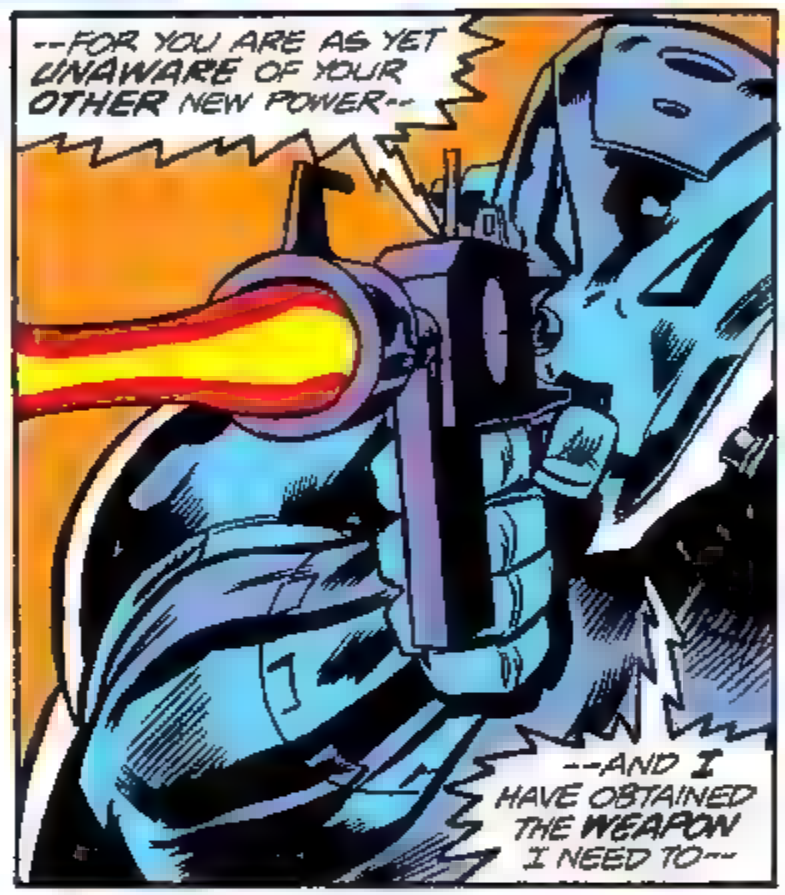
YOU ARE NOTHING LIKE HORTON, ROBOT!


YOU HAVE LIFE, BUT YOU LACK ANY TRACE OF HUMANITY! YOU WANT TO DESTROY MANKIND, RATHER THAN ADD TO IT!
BUT YOU WON'T!
KAM

YOU ROBBED ME OF MY ABILITY TO FLAME ON, IT SEEMS--
--BUT YOU ADDED TO MY STRENGTH--

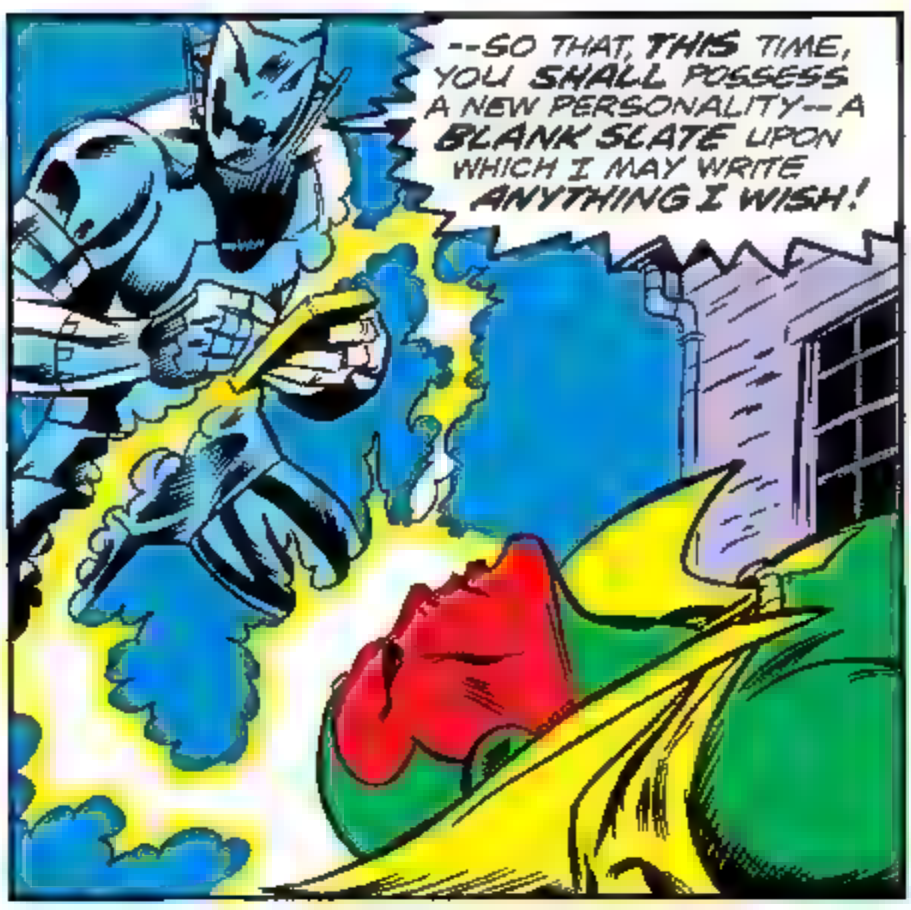
--AND THAT WAS YOUR MISTAKE!
WH--? YOU'RE NOT HARMED!
I AM ULTRON-5, FOOL-- THE ULTIMATE ROBOT!
WOM!

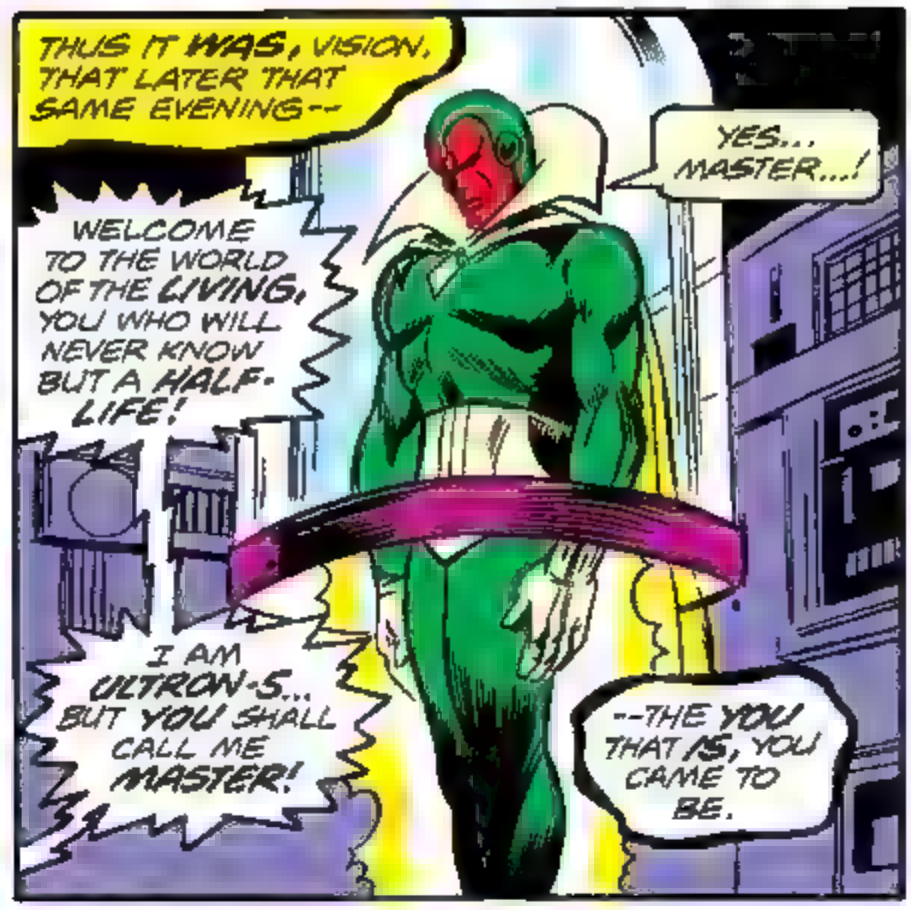

I HAVE BUT ONE WEAKNESS, WHICH YOU SHALL NEVER LEARN!
AND FAILING THAT, YOU CANNOT DESTROY ME--

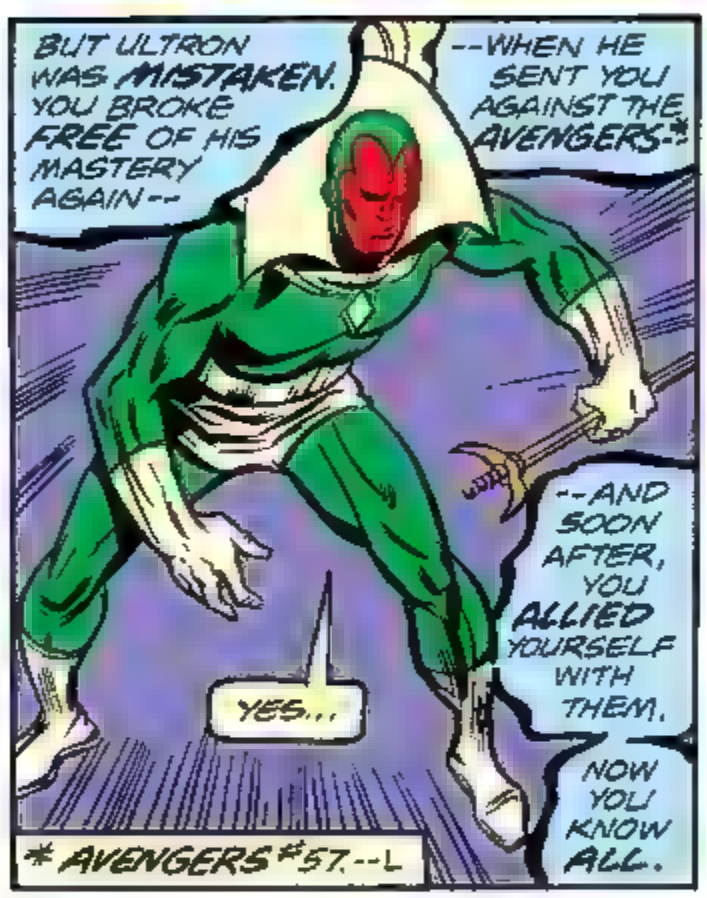

--FOR YOU ARE AS YET UNAWARE OF YOUR OTHER NEW POWER--
--AND I HAVE OBTAINED THE WEAPON I NEED TO--

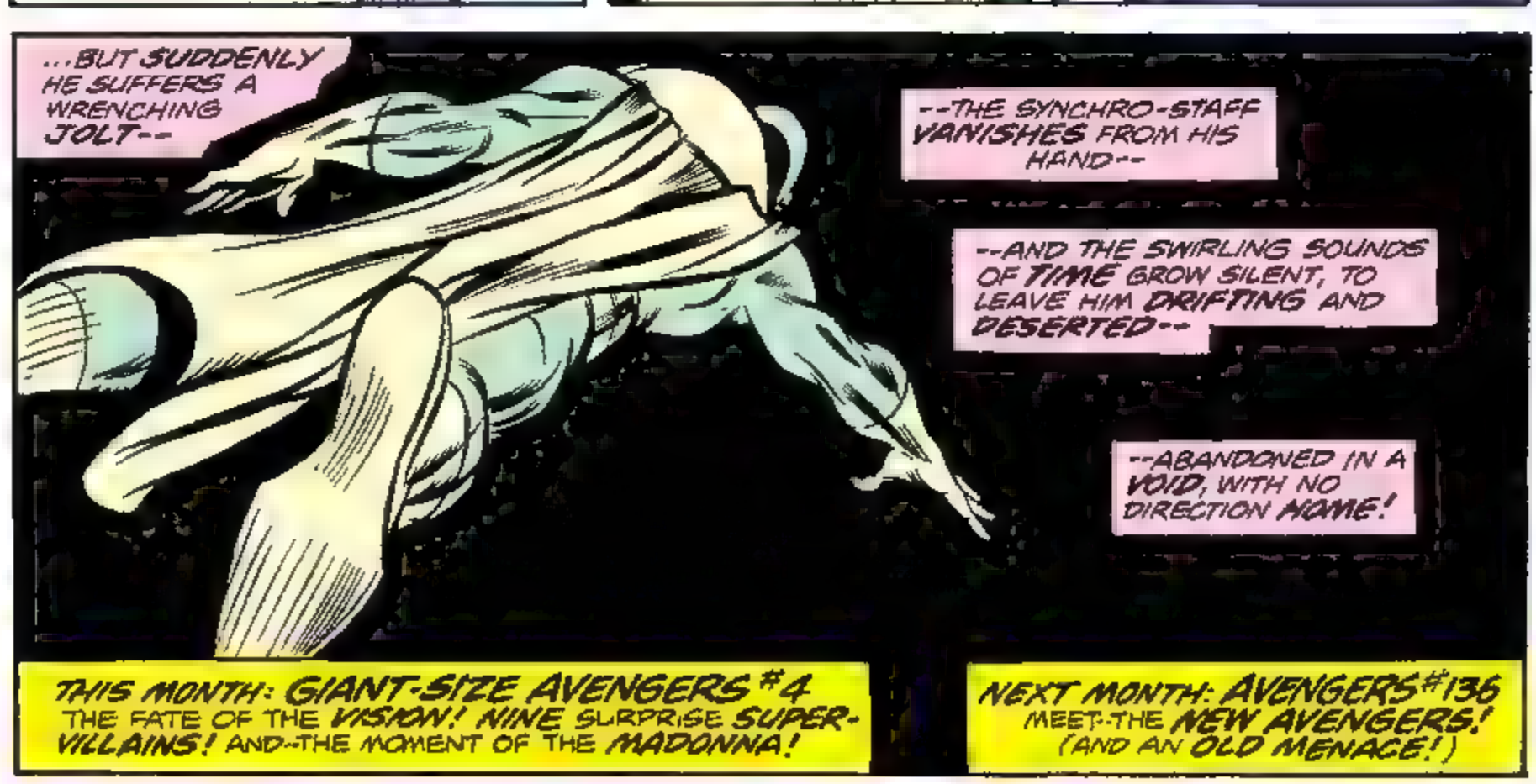
--END YOUR ELECTRONIC LIFE AGAIN!
YOU WERE A DETERMINED ANTAGONIST, TORCH, BUT SO WAS I-- AND I SHALL ALWAYS BE YOUR MASTER!
NOW, WHEN YOU AWAKE TO MY BIDDING ONCE MORE--

--I SHALL HAVE COMPLETED THE MIND ALTERATION PROCEDURE, EVEN WITHOUT HORTON'S GUIDANCE!
I CANNOT EQUAL HIS PRECISION, OF COURSE, BUT I AM CERTAIN THIS COMPUTER TAPE I DISCOVERED AMONG HENRY PYM'S EFFECTS WILL SERVE AS A MODEL--
NORMAN'S BRAIN PATTERN'S









THIS MONTH: GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #4 THE FATE OF THE VISION! NINE SURPRISE SUPER-VILLAINS! AND--THE MOMENT OF THE MADONNA!

NEXT MONTH: AVENGERS #135 MEET--THE NEW AVENGERS! (AND AN OLD MENACE!)

GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS

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GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS™

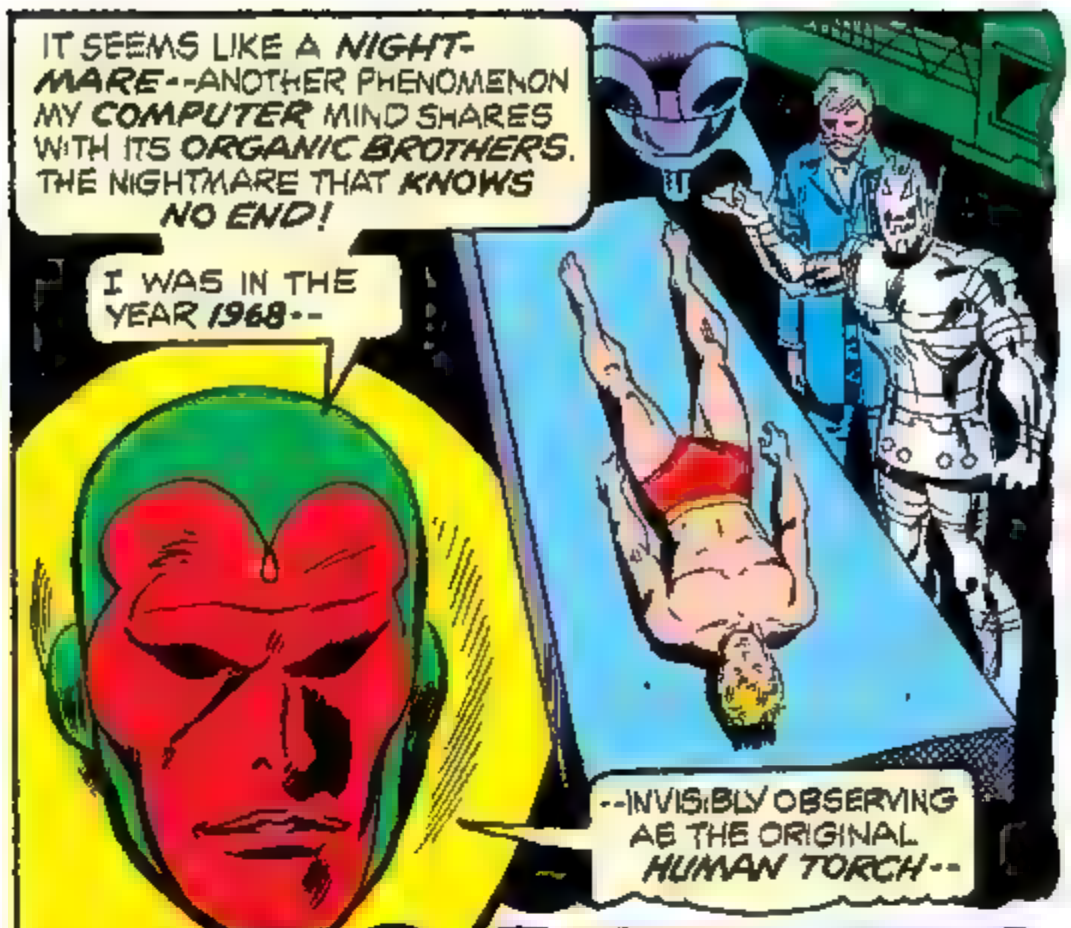
NEW!

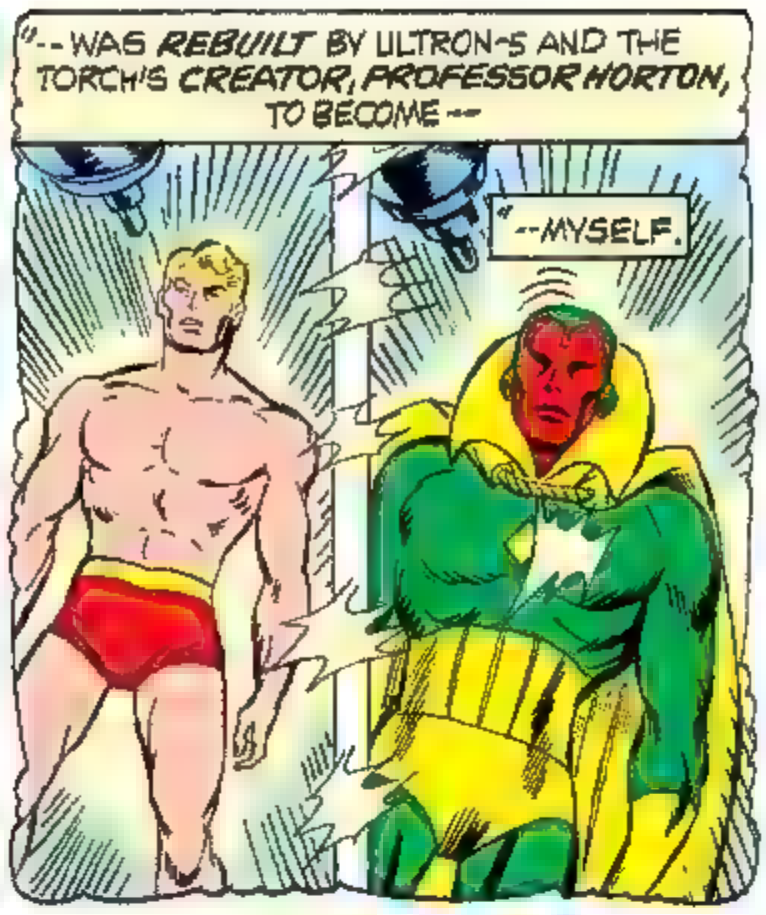
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE-- FOR THE MOST LONG-AWAITED WEDDING OF THE DECADE!

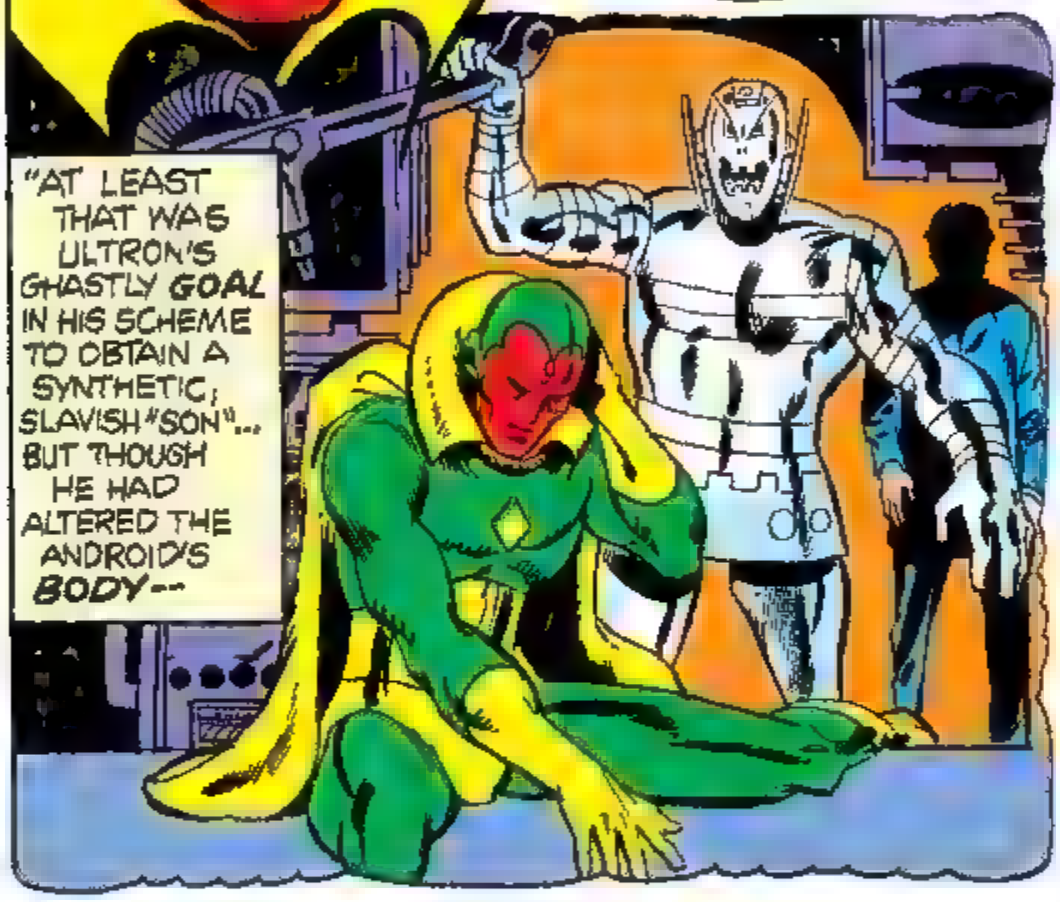
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

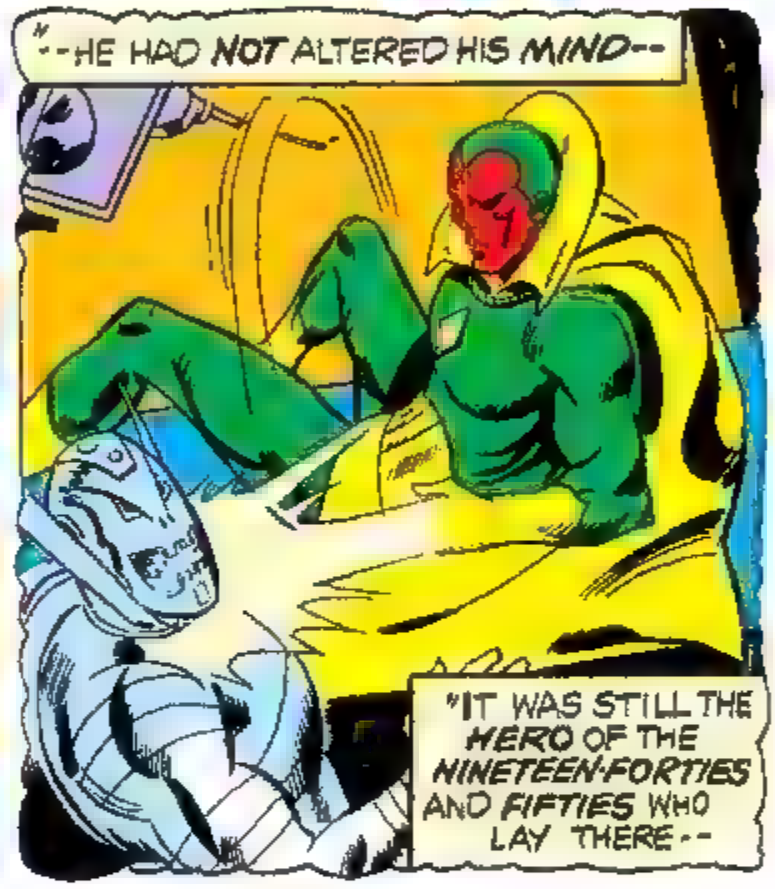
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

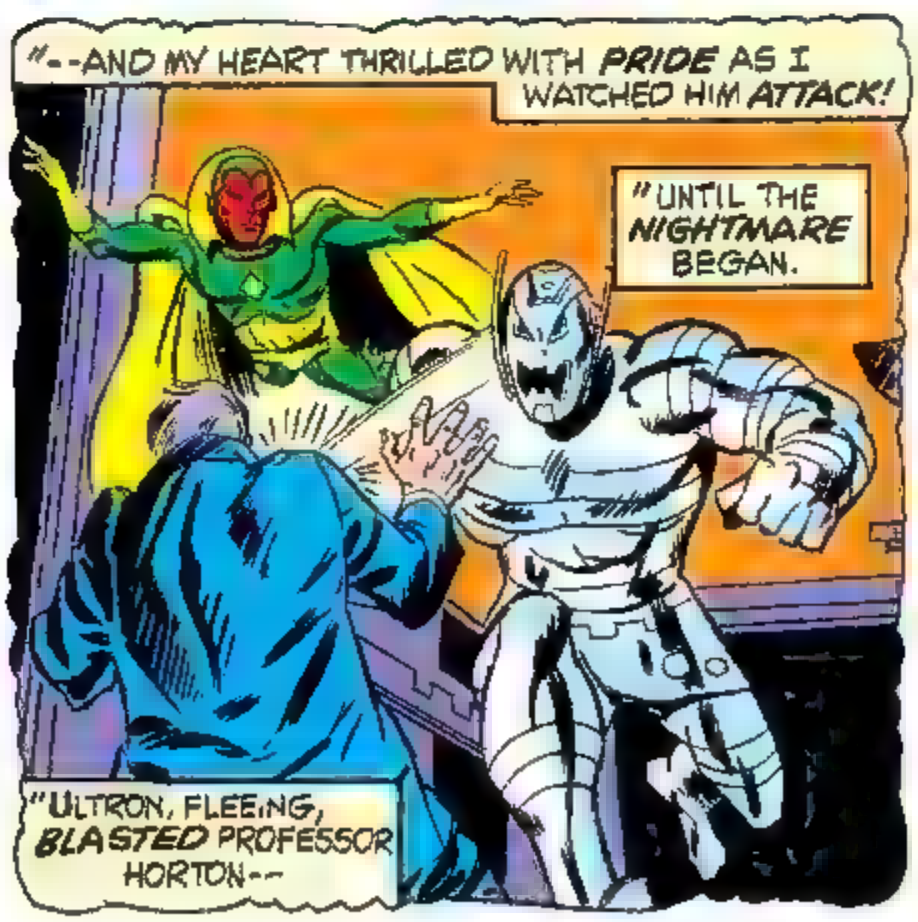
STEVE ENGLEHART SAGA / DON HECK PENCILS / JOHN TARTAG INKS / C. VETTER, LETTERER / P. GOLDBERG, COLORIST / LEN WEIN EDITOR

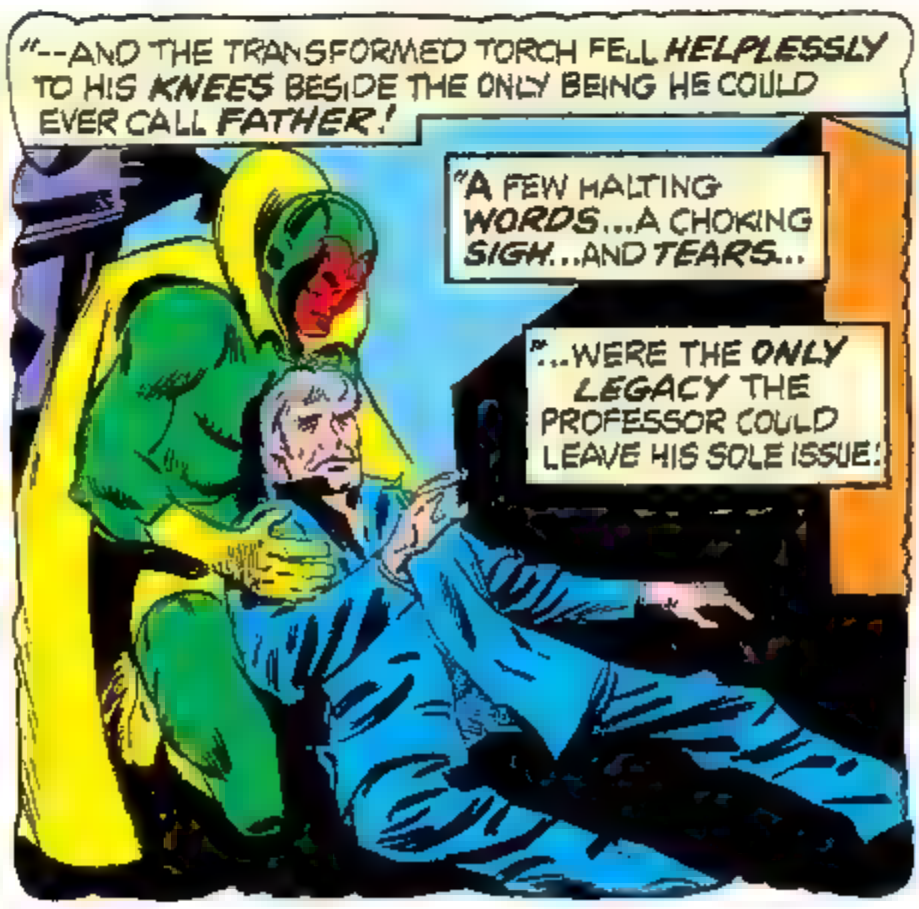

IT SEEMS LIKE A NIGHT-MARE--ANOTHER PHENOMENON MY COMPUTER MIND SHARES WITH ITS ORGANIC BROTHERS. THE NIGHTMARE THAT KNOWS NO END!
I WAS IN THE YEAR 1968--
--INVISIBLY OBSERVING AS THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH--

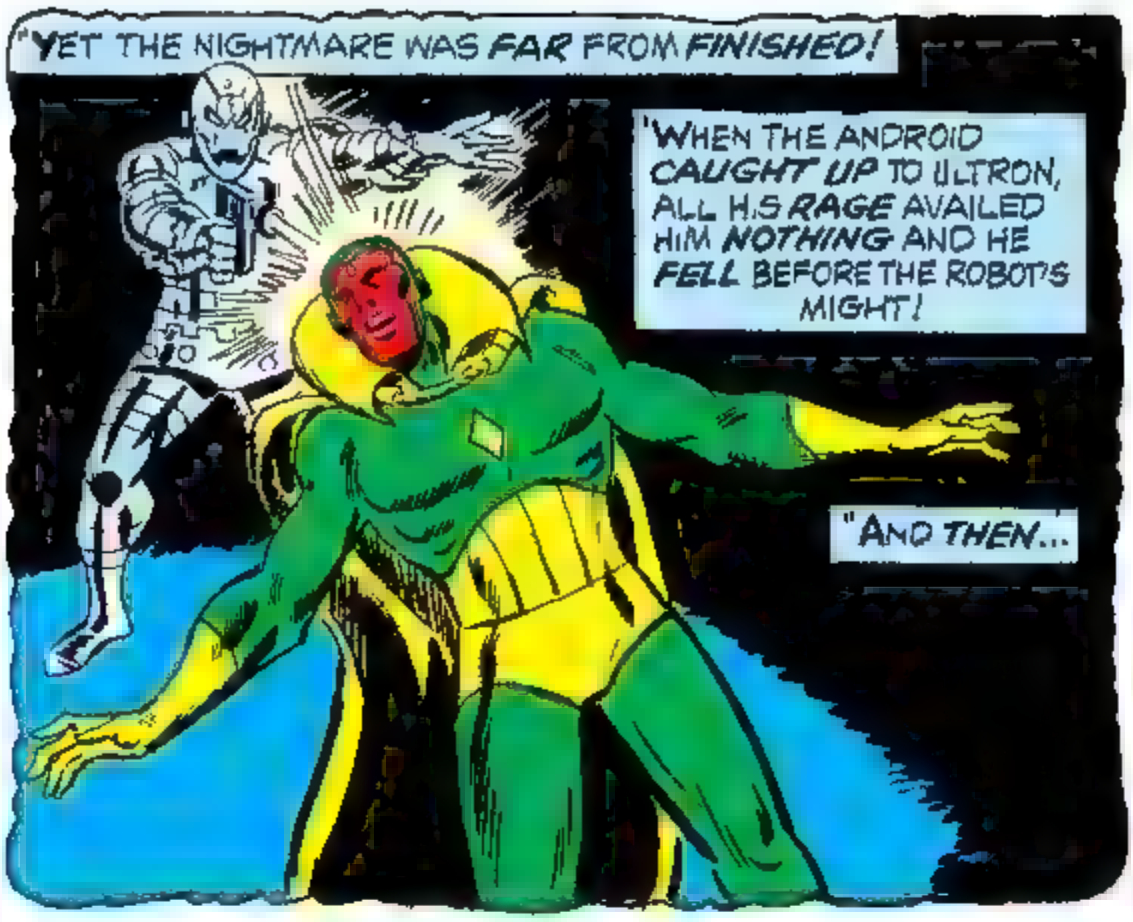

"--WAS REBUILT BY ULTRON-5 AND THE TORCH'S CREATOR, PROFESSOR HORTON, TO BECOME--
"--MYSELF.

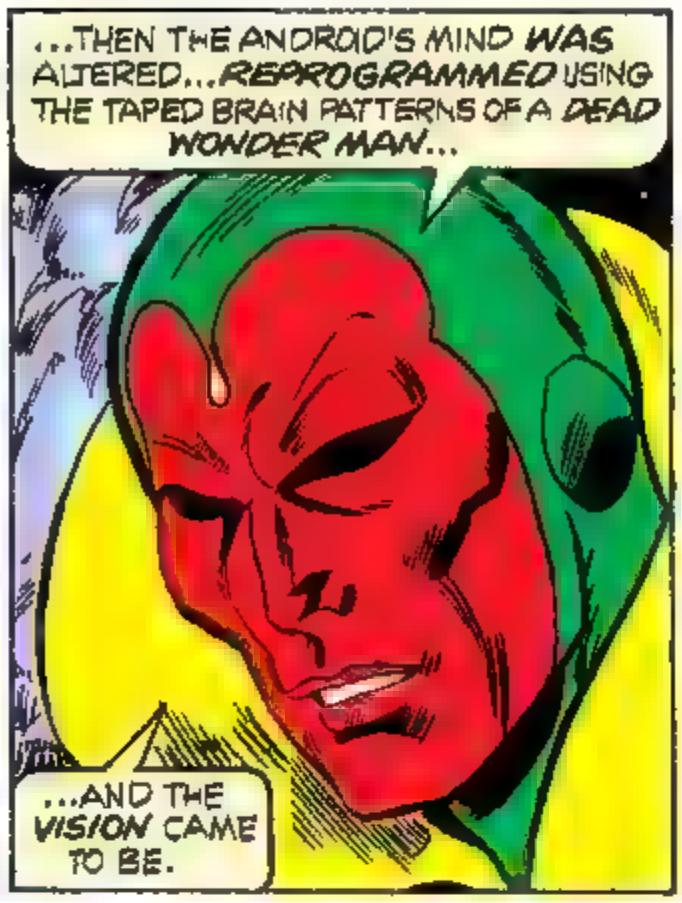

"AT LEAST THAT WAS ULTRON'S GHASTLY GOAL IN HIS SCHEME TO OBTAIN A SYNTHETIC, SLAVISH "SON"... BUT THOUGH HE HAD ALTERED THE ANDROID'S BODY--

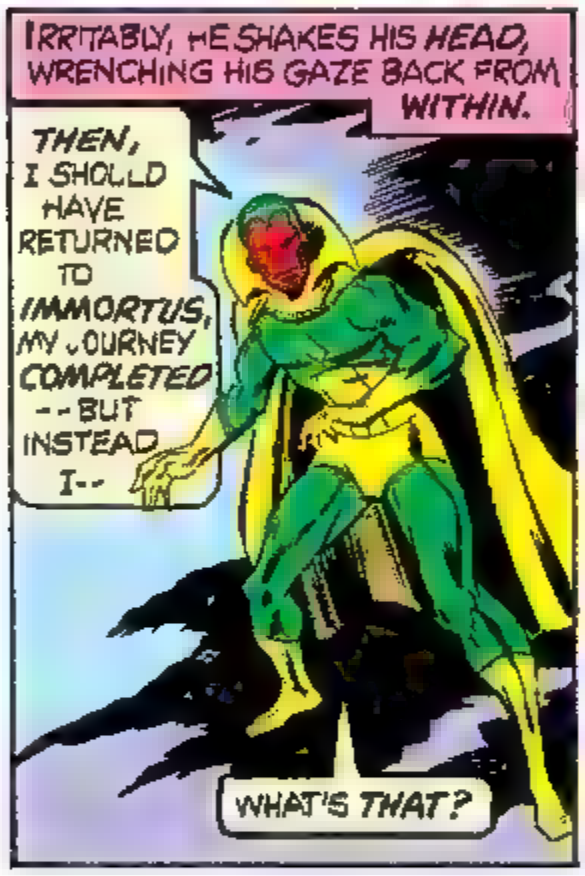

"--HE HAD NOT ALTERED HIS MIND--
"IT WAS STILL THE HERO OF THE NINETEEN-FORTIES AND FIFTIES WHO LAY THERE--


"--AND MY HEART THRILLED WITH PRIDE AS I WATCHED HIM ATTACK!
"UNTIL THE NIGHTMARE BEGAN.
"ULTRON, FLEEING, BLASTED PROFESSOR HORTON--

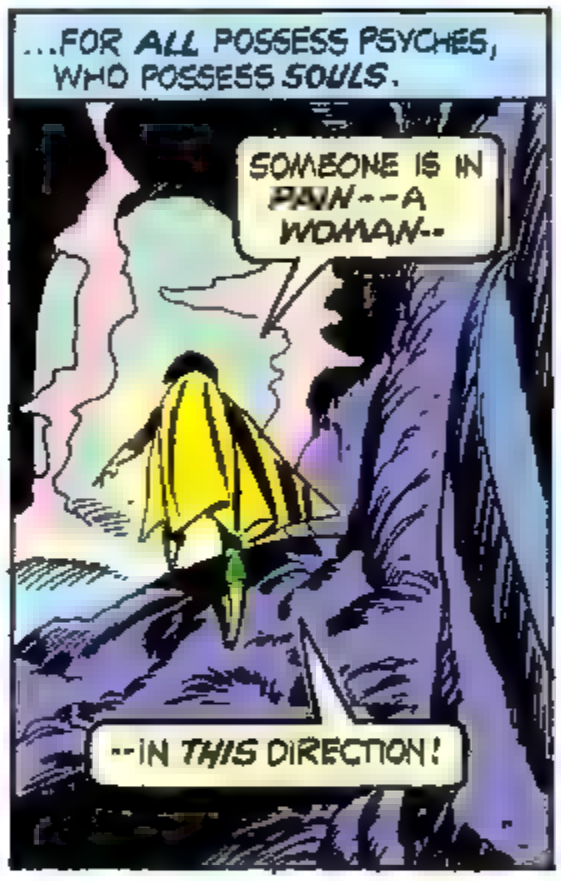

"--AND THE TRANSFORMED TORCH FELL HELPLESSLY TO HIS KNEES BESIDE THE ONLY BEING HE COULD EVER CALL FATHER!
"A FEW HALTING WORDS...A CHOKING SIGH...AND TEARS...
"...WERE THE ONLY LEGACY THE PROFESSOR COULD LEAVE HIS SOLE ISSUE!

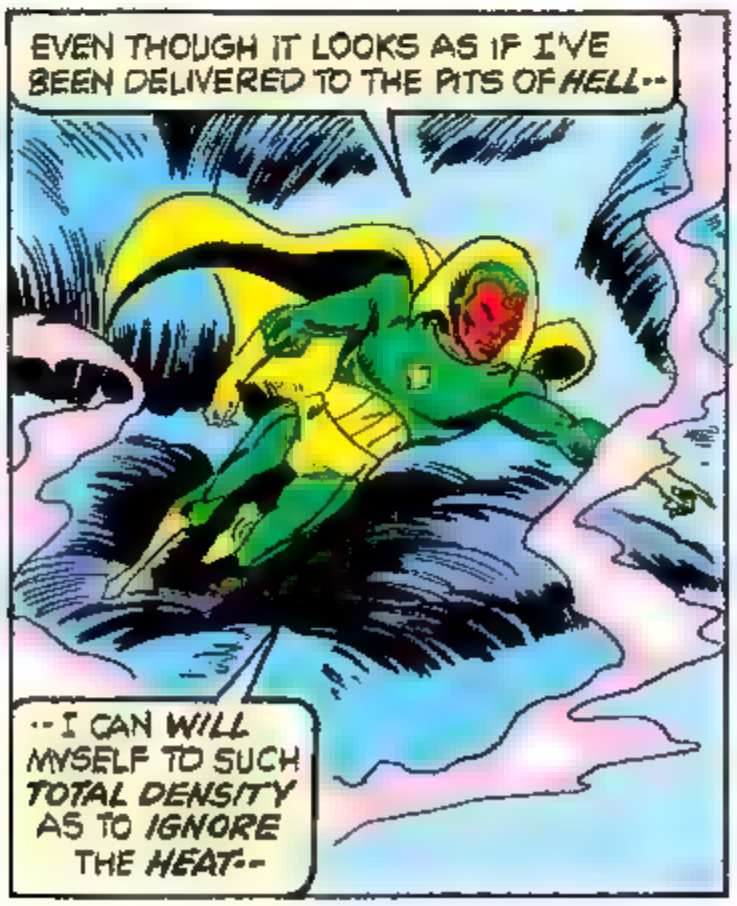

"YET THE NIGHTMARE WAS FAR FROM FINISHED!
"WHEN THE ANDROID CAUGHT UP TO ULTRON, ALL HIS RAGE AVAILED HIM NOTHING AND HE FELL BEFORE THE ROBOT'S MIGHT!
"AND THEN...


...THEN THE ANDROID'S MIND WAS ALTERED...REPROGRAMMED USING THE TAPED BRAIN PATTERNS OF A DEAD WONDER MAN...
...AND THE VISION CAME TO BE.

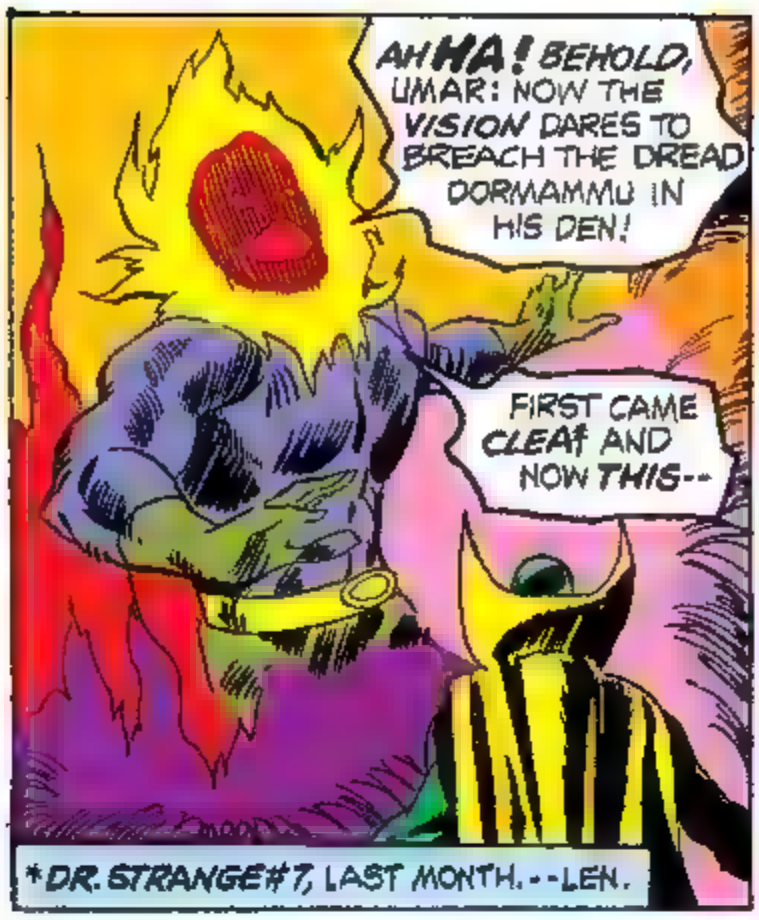

IRRITABLY, HE SHAKES HIS HEAD, WRENCHING HIS GAZE BACK FROM WITHIN.
THEN, I SHOULD HAVE RETURNED TO IMMORTUS, MY JOURNEY COMPLETED --BUT INSTEAD I--
WHAT'S THAT?

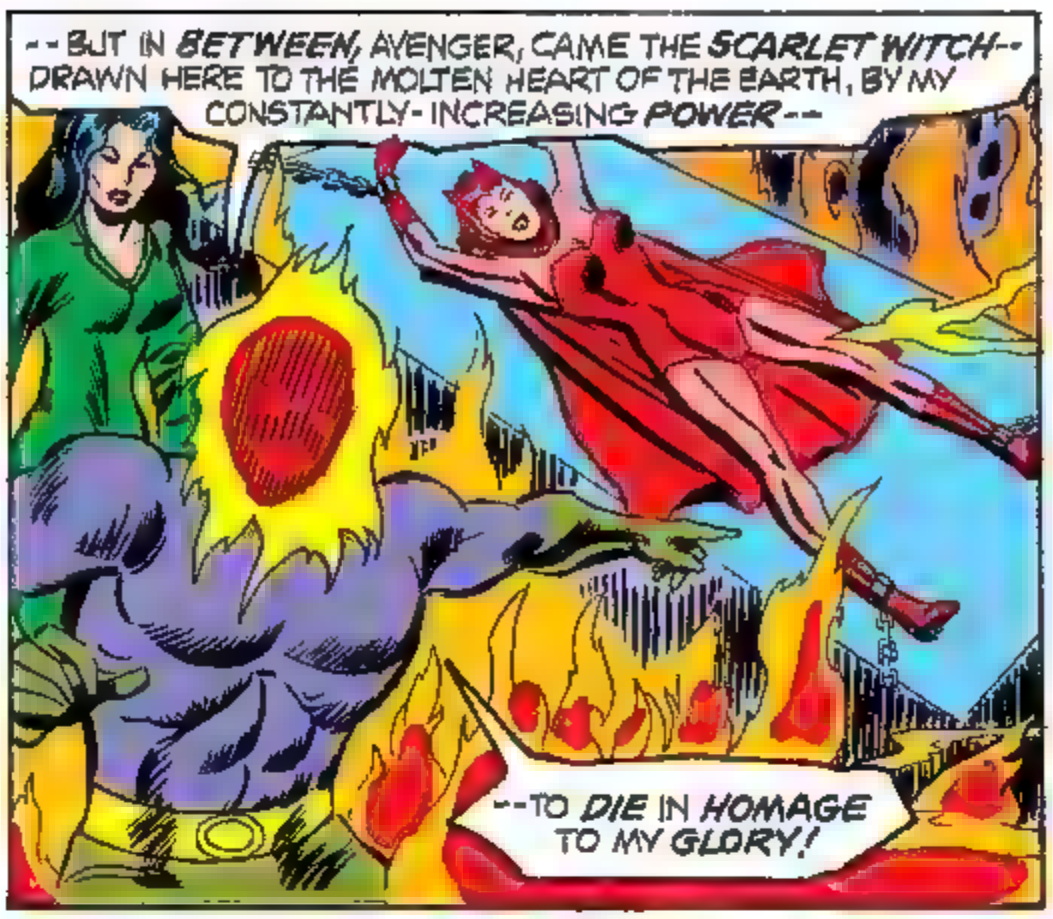
CAN A SYNTHETIC MAN, A MAN OF WIRES AND DIODES, PLASTIC AND PARTS HEAR A PSYCHIC SCREAM?
THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUS..


...FOR ALL POSSESS PSYCHES, WHO POSSESS SOULS.
SOMEONE IS IN PAIN--A WOMAN--
--IN THIS DIRECTION!


EVEN THOUGH IT LOOKS AS IF I'VE BEEN DELIVERED TO THE PITS OF HELL--
--I CAN WILL MYSELF TO SUCH TOTAL DENSITY AS TO IGNORE THE HEAT--

--AND SO I--
NO!
BROTHER! BEHIND YOU!


AH HA! BEHOLD, UMAR: NOW THE VISION DARES TO BREACH THE DREAD DORMAMMU IN HIS DEN!
FIRST CAME CLEA* AND NOW THIS--
*DR. STRANGE #7, LAST MONTH.--LEN.

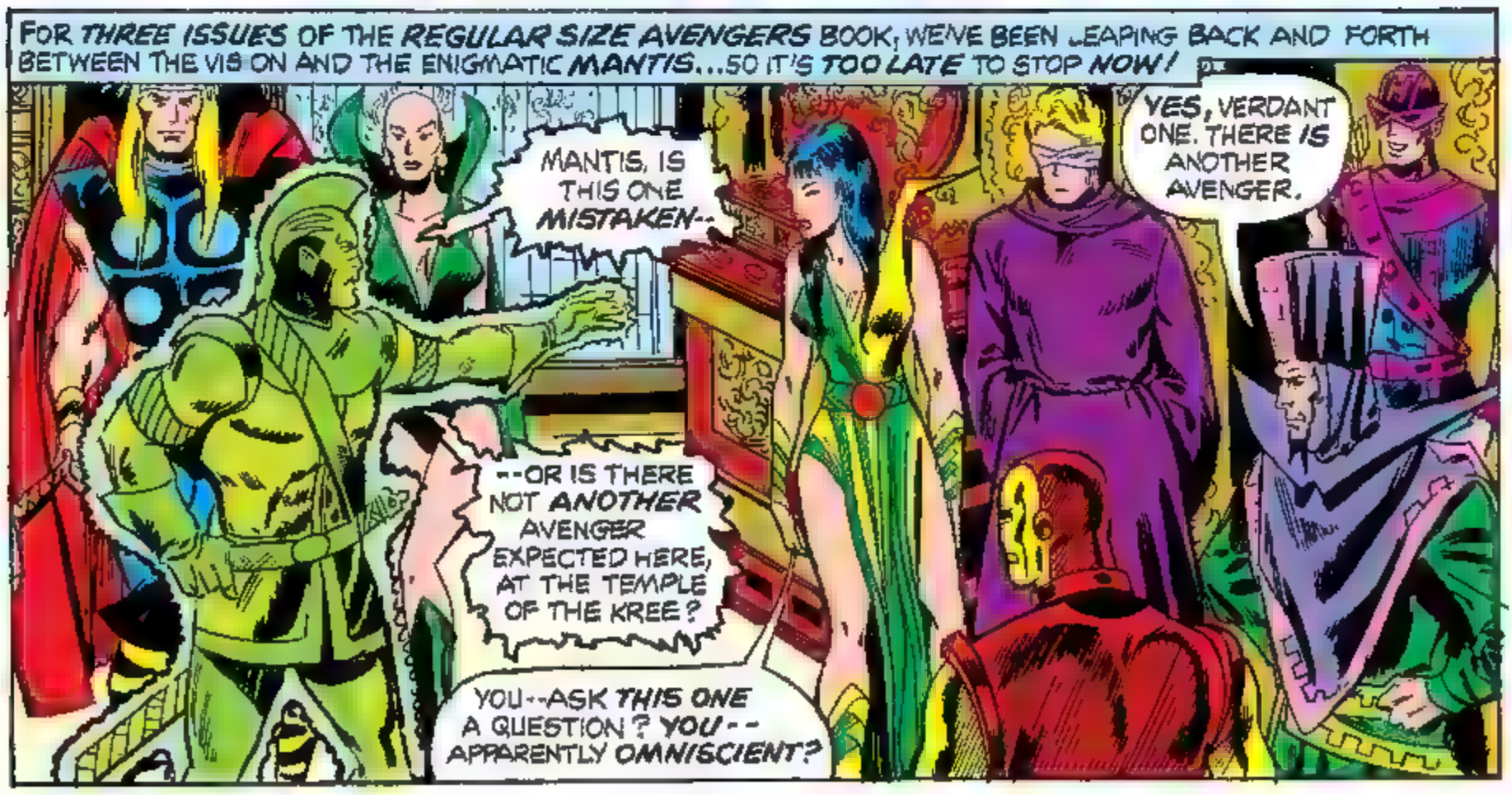

--BUT IN BETWEEN, AVENGER, CAME THE SCARLET WITCH-- DRAWN HERE TO THE MOLTEN HEART OF THE EARTH, BY MY CONSTANTLY-INCREASING POWER--
--TO DIE IN HOMAGE TO MY GLORY!

AS REVENGE FOR YOUR DEFEAT AT HER HANDS, I TAKE IT?*
YOU TAKE THINGS QUITE CALMLY, CREATURE--
* AVENGERS #118.--L.

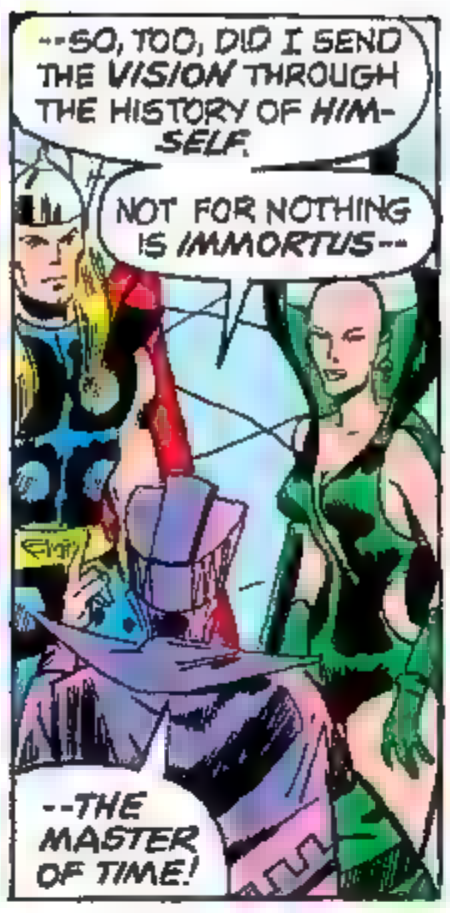
--IN THE FACE OF ONE ALREADY POWERFUL ENOUGH--
--TO IMPRISON THE EARTH GODDESS!

EMOTIONS ARE MY OBSESSION, DORMAMMU, BUT THEY WILL NOT HAMPER ME NOW!
I MUST MAKE FULL USE AND SOLE USE OF MY LOGIC--

--IF I AM TO OVERCOME YOU FOR THE LIFE OF MY BELOVED.
AH HA HA HA HA HA

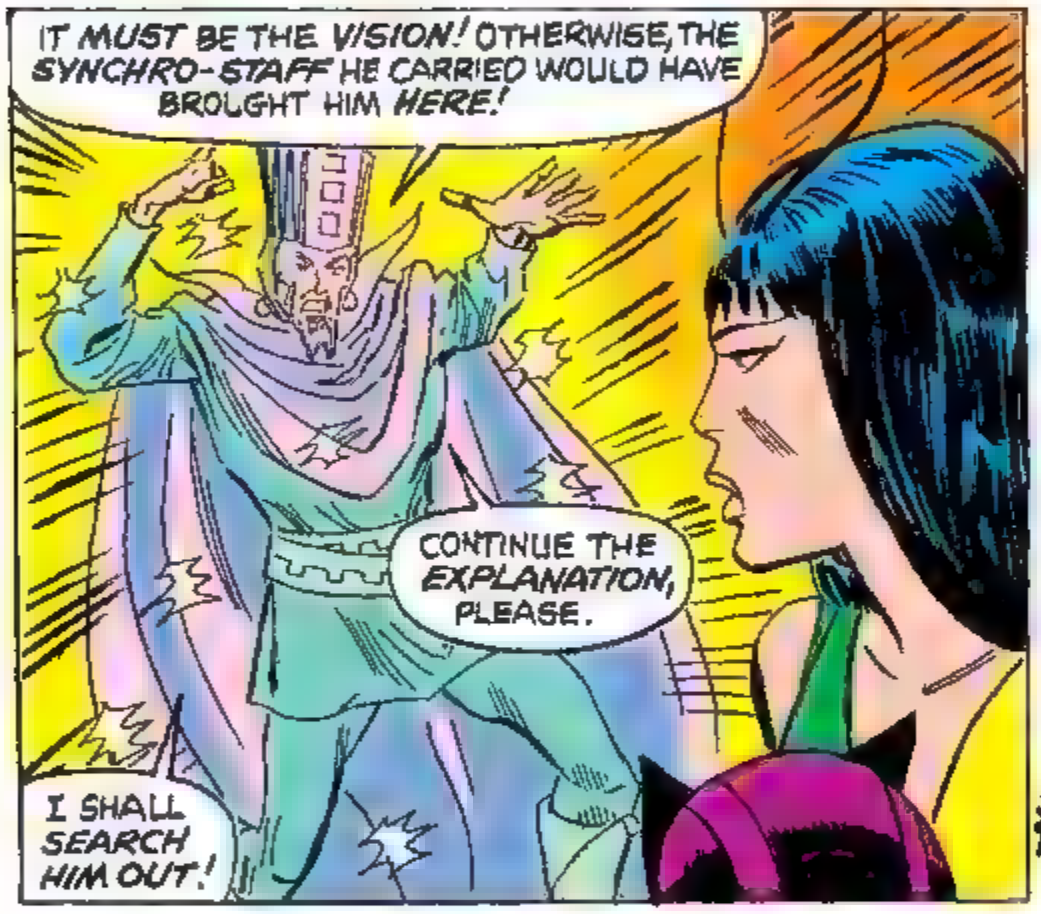

FOR THREE ISSUES OF THE REGULAR SIZE AVENGERS BOOK, WE'VE BEEN LEAPING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE VISION AND THE ENIGMATIC MANTIS...SO IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP NOW!
MANTIS, IS THIS ONE MISTAKEN--
--OR IS THERE NOT ANOTHER AVENGER EXPECTED HERE, AT THE TEMPLE OF THE KREE?
YOU--ASK THIS ONE A QUESTION? YOU--APPARENTLY OMNISCIENT?
YES, VERDANT ONE. THERE IS ANOTHER AVENGER.

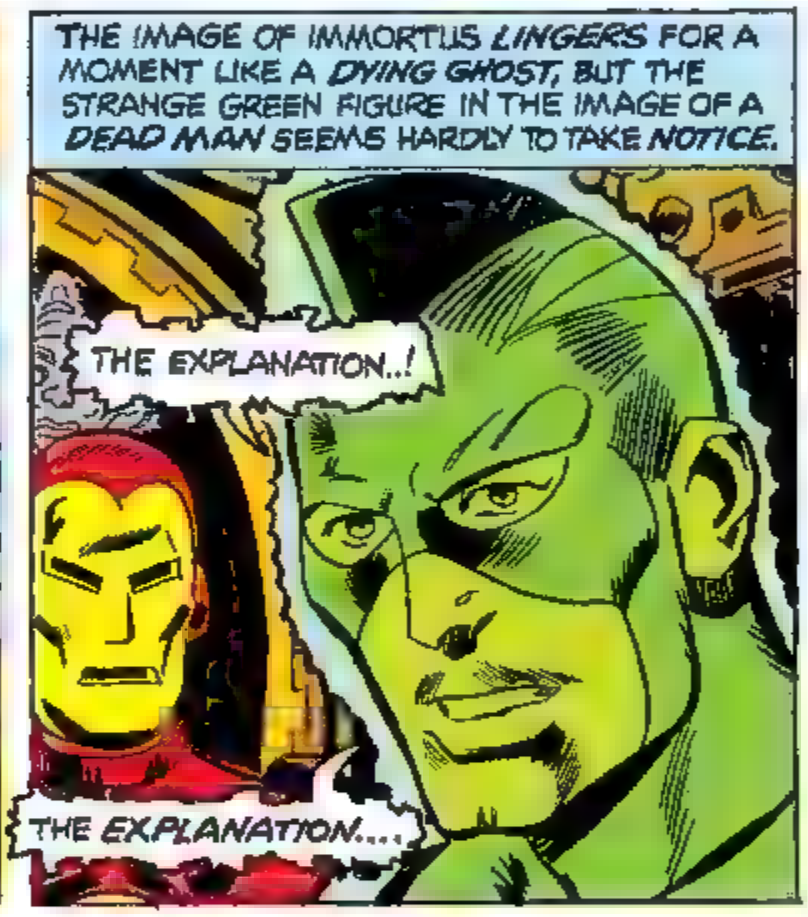
JUST AS I SENT THESE FOUR THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE KREE UNIVERSE--
--TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR YOU--


--SO, TOO, DID I SEND THE VISION THROUGH THE HISTORY OF HIMSELF.
NOT FOR NOTHING IS IMMORTUS--
--THE MASTER OF TIME!

AND YET...IN THE TIME OF NOW, THE VISION IS INDEED OVERDUE...
...AND I DO NOT KNOW WHY.
WHAT PROMPTED YOUR QUESTION?

THIS ONE...FEELS PAIN, AND A GREAT, DEEP, WRENCHING SORROW...
SORROW ENOUGH TO EMPTY THE CLOUDS!
AND HE SENSES... AVENGERS INVOLVED.


IT MUST BE THE VISION! OTHERWISE, THE SYNCHRO-STAFF HE CARRIED WOULD HAVE BROUGHT HIM HERE!
CONTINUE THE EXPLANATION, PLEASE.
I SHALL SEARCH HIM OUT!


THE IMAGE OF IMMORTUS LINGERS FOR A MOMENT LIKE A DYING GHOST, BUT THE STRANGE GREEN FIGURE IN THE IMAGE OF A DEAD MAN SEEMS HARDLY TO TAKE NOTICE.
THE EXPLANATION..!
THE EXPLANATION....

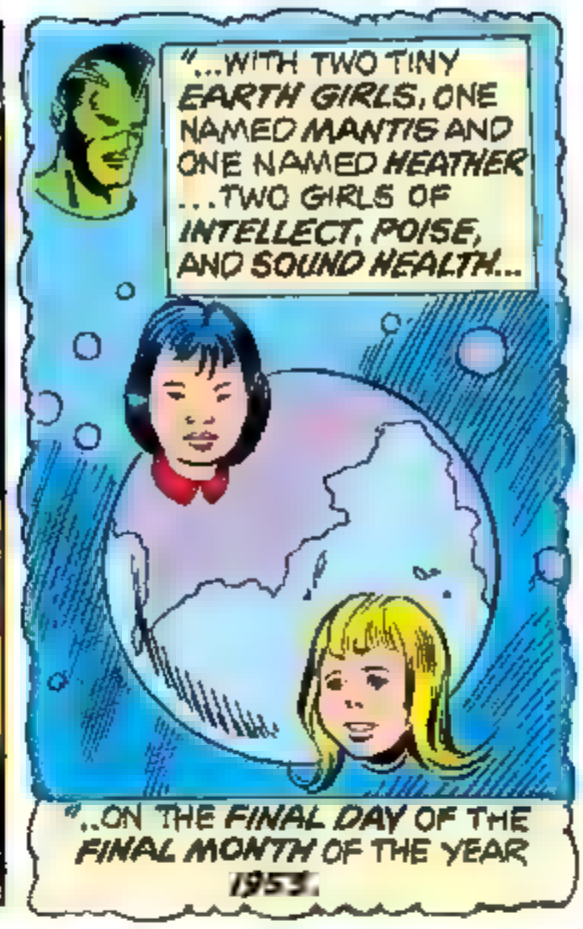
THUS FAR, YOU HAVE LEARNED WHO THE CELESTIAL MADONNA IS TO BE, MANTIS--
--AND YOU WILL SOON UNDERSTAND THAT THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE--
--HAS SHOWN YOU WHY!

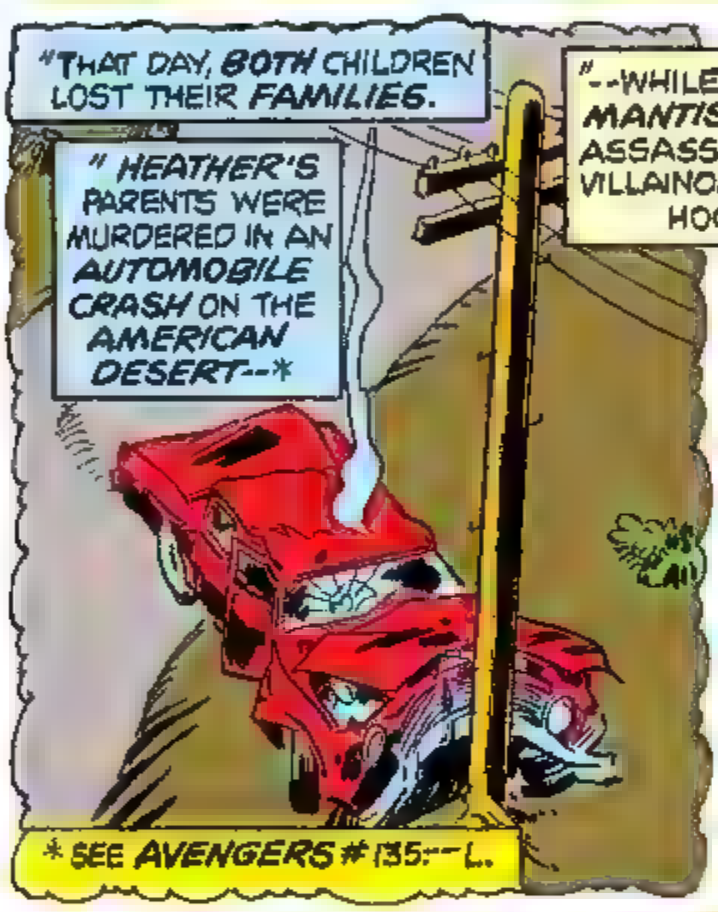
NOW, AT LAST, YOU SHALL HEAR OF MANTIS HERSELF, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW WHAT THE MADONNA IS
PRECISELY PUT, SHE IS--
--THE PERFECT HUMAN.

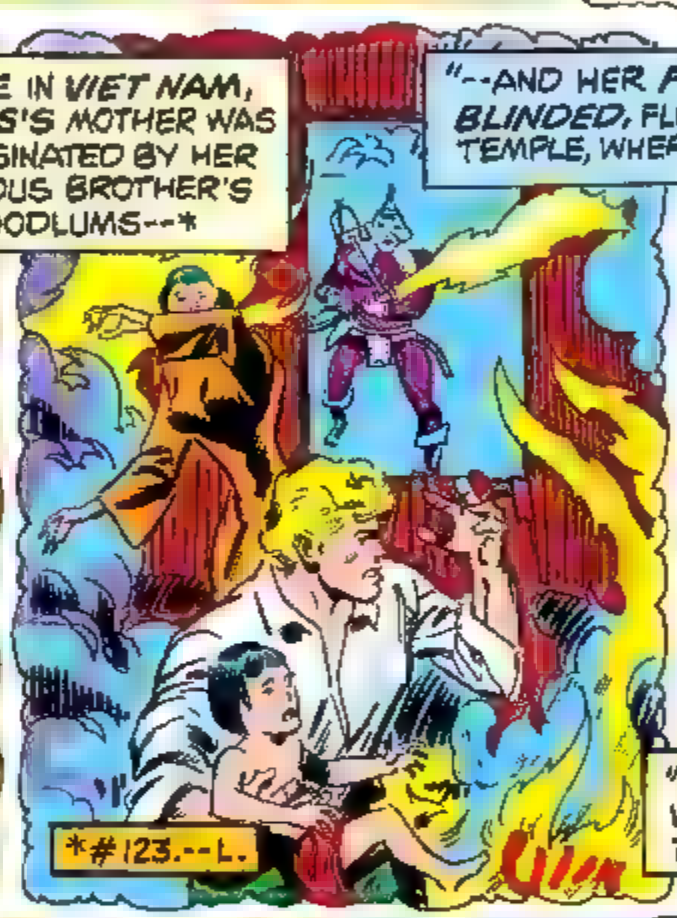
THIS ONE--?

YOU CANNOT BELIEVE IT OF YOURSELF, CAN YOU?
AS A MATTER OF FACT MANTIS, THAT IS THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS--

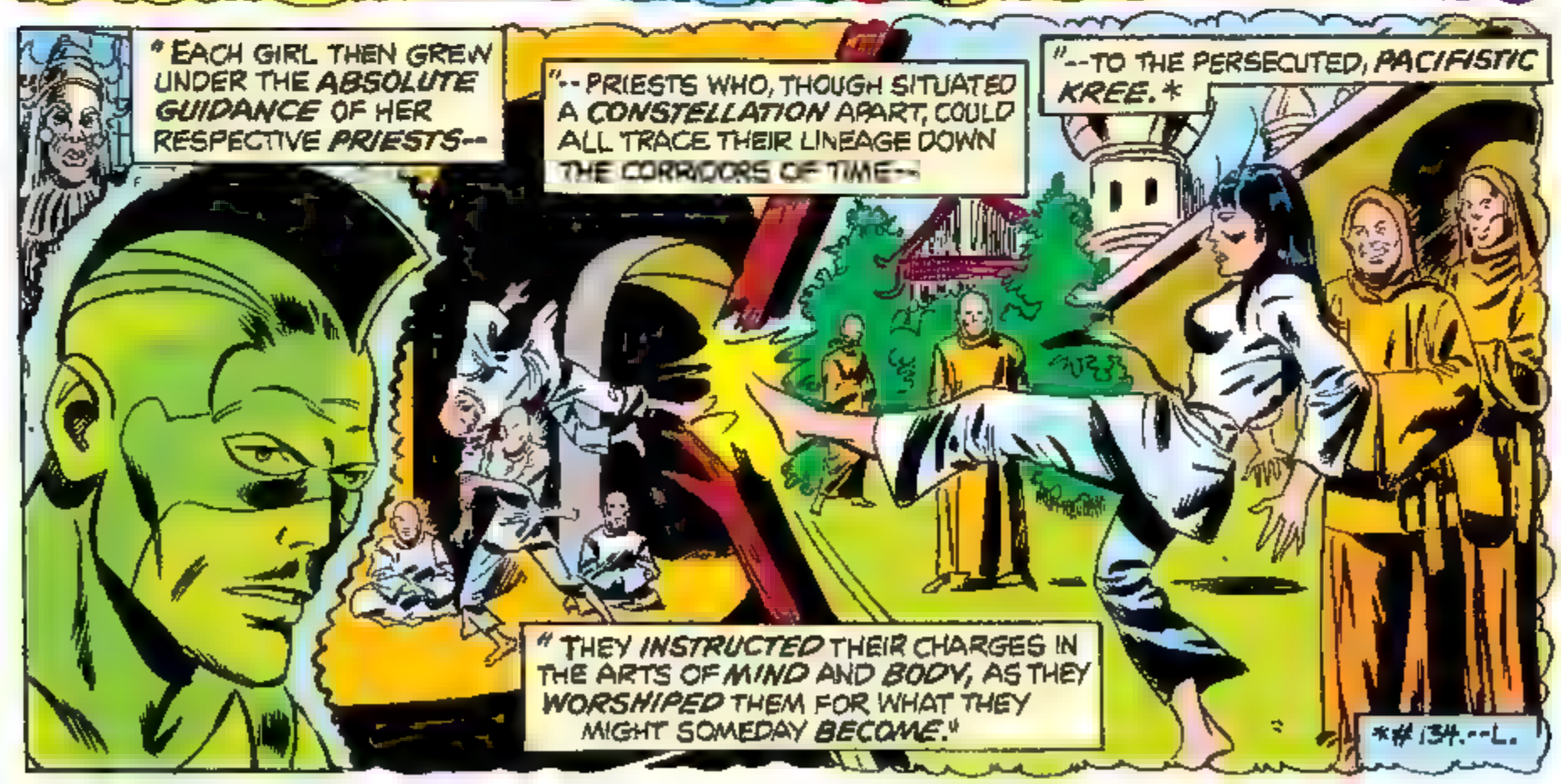
--FOR SHE WHO KNEW SHE NEARED PERFECTION--
--MOON-DRAGON--
--HAS FAILED TO FIND THE HUMANITY YOU POSSESS.
LET THIS ONE BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.


"...WITH TWO TINY EARTH GIRLS, ONE NAMED MANTIS AND ONE NAMED HEATHER ...TWO GIRLS OF INTELLECT, POISE, AND SOUND HEALTH...
"..ON THE FINAL DAY OF THE FINAL MONTH OF THE YEAR 1953.


"THAT DAY, BOTH CHILDREN LOST THEIR FAMILIES.
" HEATHER'S PARENTS WERE MURDERED IN AN AUTOMOBILE CRASH ON THE AMERICAN DESERT--*
* SEE AVENGERS # 135.--L.


"--WHILE IN VIET NAM, MANTIS'S MOTHER WAS ASSASSINATED BY HER VILLAINOUS BROTHER'S HOODLUMS--*
"--AND HER FATHER, THOUGH BLINDED, FLED W TH HER TO THIS TEMPLE, WHERE HE GAVE HER UP.
*# 123.--L.

"SIMULTANEOUSLY, HEATHER WAS BEING TAKEN TO A TEMPLE ON TITAN.


" EACH GIRL THEN GREW UNDER THE ABSOLUTE GUIDANCE OF HER RESPECTIVE PRIESTS--
"-- PRIESTS WHO, THOUGH SITUATED A CONSTELLATION APART, COULD ALL TRACE THEIR LINEAGE DOWN THE CORRIDORS OF TIME--
"--TO THE PERSECUTED, PACIFISTIC KREE.*
" THEY INSTRUCTED THEIR CHARGES IN THE ARTS OF MIND AND BODY, AS THEY WORSHIPED THEM FOR WHAT THEY MIGHT SOMEDAY BECOME."
*# 134.--L.

YOU SAID EARLIER, MANTIS, THAT MOONDRAGON'S ORIGIN AND YOURS WERE SIMILAR. IT IS NOT SO SURPRISING WHEN YOU SEE THEY WERE DESIGNED TO PRODUCE SIMILAR WOMEN, EH?

AND YOU ARE MORE SIMILAR...

....THAN EITHER OF YOU KNOWS! FOR YOU KNOW NOTHING OF YOUR LATER TRAINING...

...THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF YOUR INSTRUCTION!

YOU SEE, YOU TWO WERE TRAINED TO PERCEIVE THE TELEPATHY OF THE PLANT-LIFE YOUR PRIESTS NURTURED!

"YOU WERE THE ONLY NON-KREE EVER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE COTATI!

"THAT WAS THE BASIS FOR WHAT MANTIS NOW CALLS HER 'EMPATHIC NATURE'...

"...AND FOR MOONDRAGON'S PHENOMENAL COMPREHENSION OF THE HUMAN MIND--A COMPREHENSION NATURAL ONLY TO THE COTATI'S NON-HUMAN INTELLECT.

"HOWEVER, UPON YOUR SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THIS INSTRUCTION--

"--ALL MEMORIES OF IT WERE REMOVED FROM YOUR MINDS.

"MOONDRAGON THEN REMAINED IN HER TEMPLE, TO CONTINUE THE LIFE OF A PRIESTESS...

"...WHILE MANTIS WAS GIVEN A SET OF FALSE MEMORIES, CONCERNING A GIRLHOOD IN SAIGON."

ONCE, THIS ONE ATTACKED YOU FOR SUCH LIES, LIBRA--*

--AND SHE FEELS SHE SHOULD DO SO AGAIN!

OF COURSE, FOR FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, YOU RESISTED THE THOUGHT OF ANYTHING BUT THE PRESENT.

YOU STILL DO.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS? YOU ARE NO PRIEST!

NO...

*#123.--L

I AM A MEMBER OF THE ZODIAC CARTEL. AS I TOLD YOU, THE PRIESTS NEVER COULD CURB MY DESIRE FOR EASY LIVING.

BUT I AM ALSO YOUR FATHER--

--AND I KNEW MORE OF THEIR PLANS FOR YOU THAN I ADMITTED--SO I WAS THEIRS TO COMMAND IN ANY MATTER INVOLVING YOUR WELFARE.

IF I MIGHT *INTERJECT* HERE...

...SINCE I SEEM BOTH *INTIMATELY INVOLVED* IN THIS STORY AND YET *IGNORED* BY IT....

...WHY WERE *TWO* GIRLS CHOSEN, AND WHY WERE OUR PATHS TURNED *APART*?

TO DEVELOP A *PERFECT HUMAN* IS NOT AN *EASY TASK*, MOON-DRAGON!

THOUGH YOU BOTH POSSESSED *PROMISING ATTRIBUTES*, NO ONE COULD HAVE FORETOLD IN *1953*, WHICH OF YOU WOULD PROVE THE *BETTER*.

MOREOVER, DURING THE *LONG YEARS* OF YOUR MATURATION, *ONE* OF YOU MIGHT HAVE *DIED*--SO A *SECOND* GIRL INSURED *CONTINUATION* IN SUCH A CASE.

HOWEVER, WHEN YOU BOTH *COMPLETED* YOUR TRAINING, IT WAS APPARENT THAT *MANTIS* WAS OF AN *EARTHIER NATURE* THAN YOU--

--SO SHE WAS SELECTED TO *ABANDON* HER TEMPLE AND WALK AMIDST *OTHER HUMANS*--

--TO SEEK *PERFECT HUMANITY*.

"AS YOU HAVE SINCE *LEARNED*, FROM YOUR ENCOUNTERS WITH *CAPTAIN MAR-VELL* AND *DAREDEVIL*, A *CLOISTERED* LIFE CANNOT IMPART COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE IN THE *FULL* SOCIETY.

"THUS, WHILE YOU *DISTINGUISHED* YOURSELF AS *PRIESTESS*, *ATHLETE*, AND *SCIENTIST* ON TITAN--

"--*MANTIS* WAS LEARNING THE *MYSTERIES* OF *MANKIND*--

"--ON THE STREETS OF *MANKIND*...

THEN *I*, WITH ALL MY *KNOWLEDGE* AND *POWER OF THE MIND*, AM *INFERIOR* TO--TO MANTIS?

YOU WERE *NOT CHOSEN*. THAT IS ALL.

YOU ARE A WOMAN OF *MUCH* KNOWLEDGE AND POWER OF THE MIND, AND YOUR LIFE IS FAR FROM FINISHED. AT ITS *END* WAITS YOUR *DESTINY*.

TODAY, HOWEVER, WE SPEAK OF *MANTIS*!

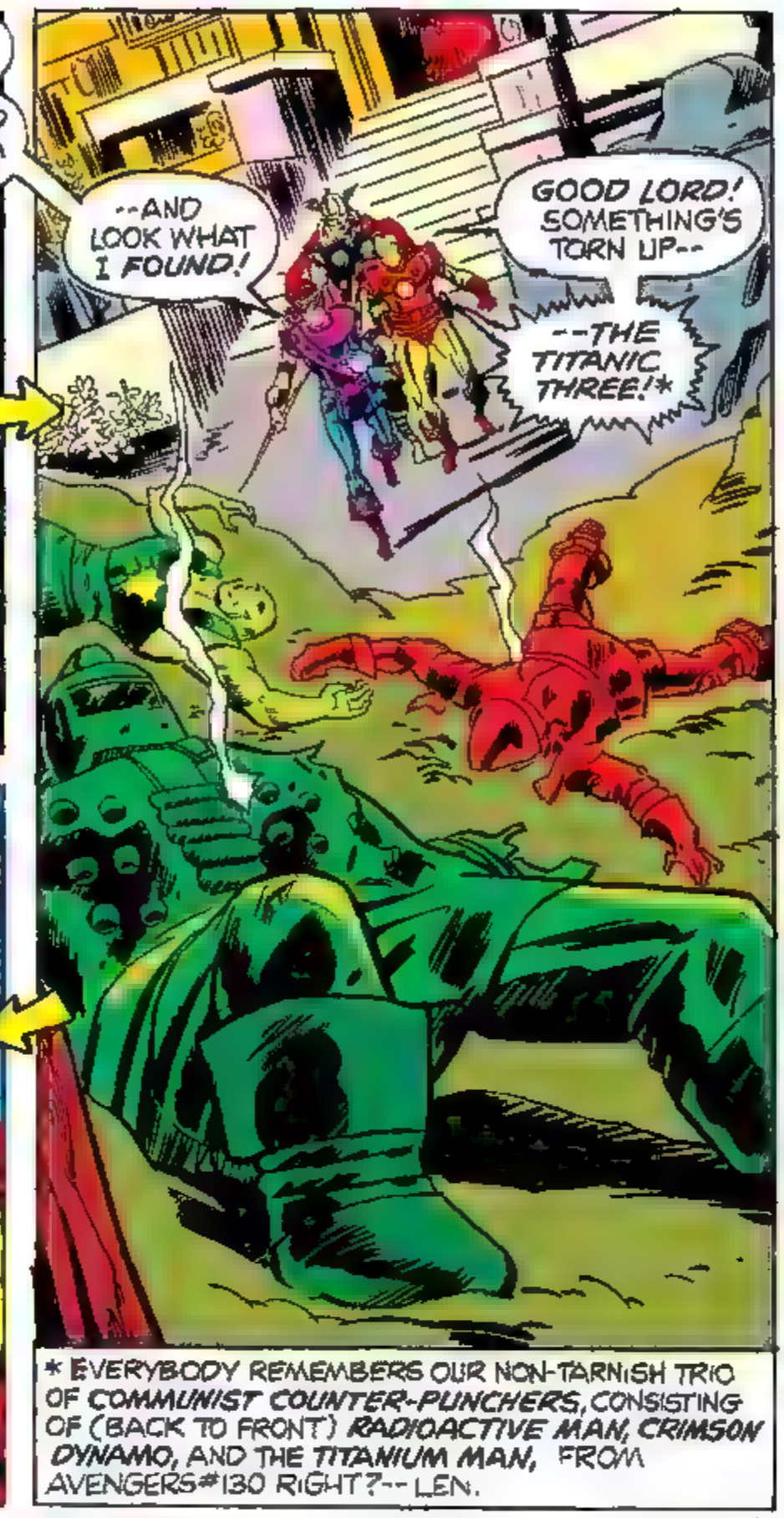
THIS DAY, OLD FRIEND, IT DOTH SEEM THAT E'EN THE *MIGHTY THOR* SON OF *ODIN*, SHALL ENCOUNTER WONDERS *UNDREAMT* IN ASGARD!

--WHILE HE AND THE OTHER *MIGHTY AVENGERS* DO NAUGHT BUT *OBSERVE*!

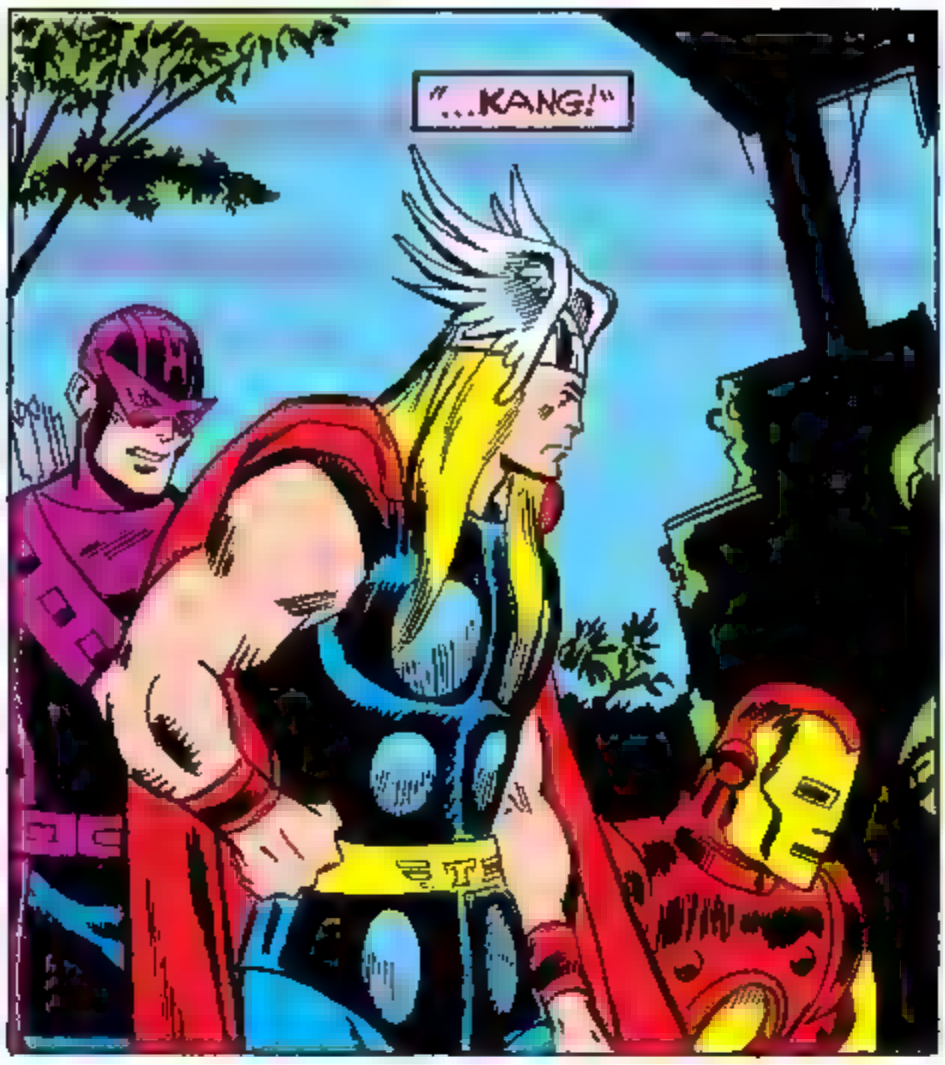
YEAH, I KNOW WHAT YOU *MEAN*, GOLDILOCKS.

WAIT A MINUTE!

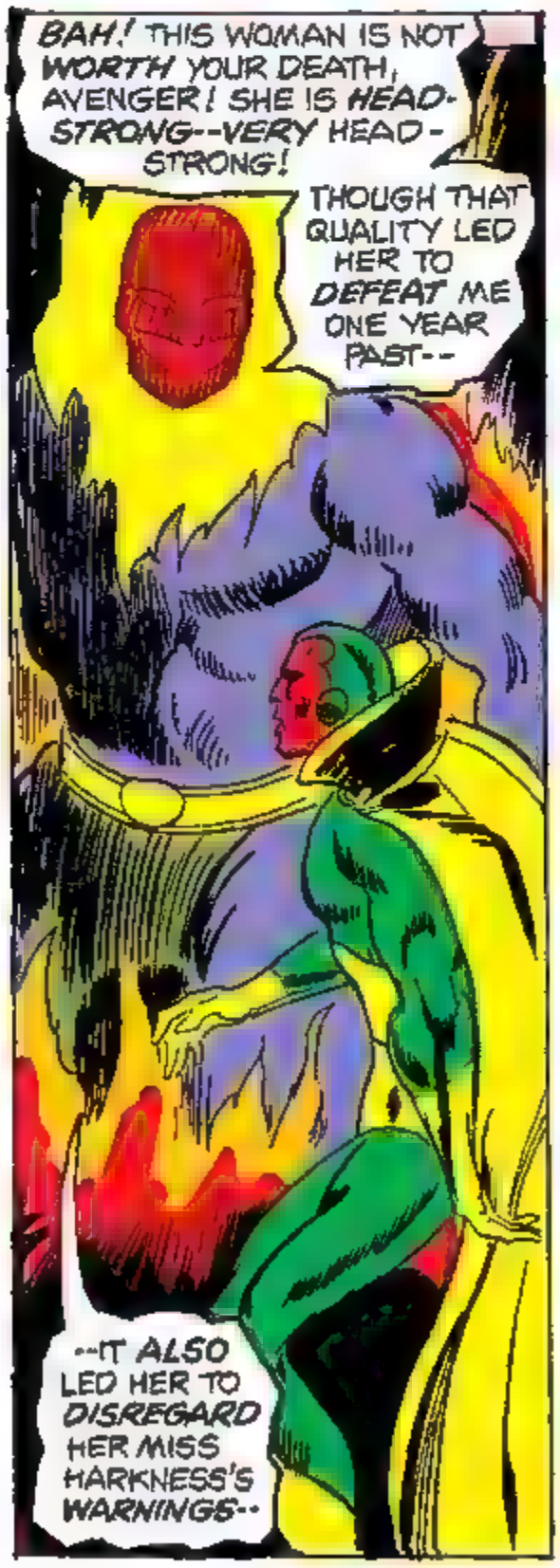
WHAT'S *HAWKEYE* WANT, I WONDER?



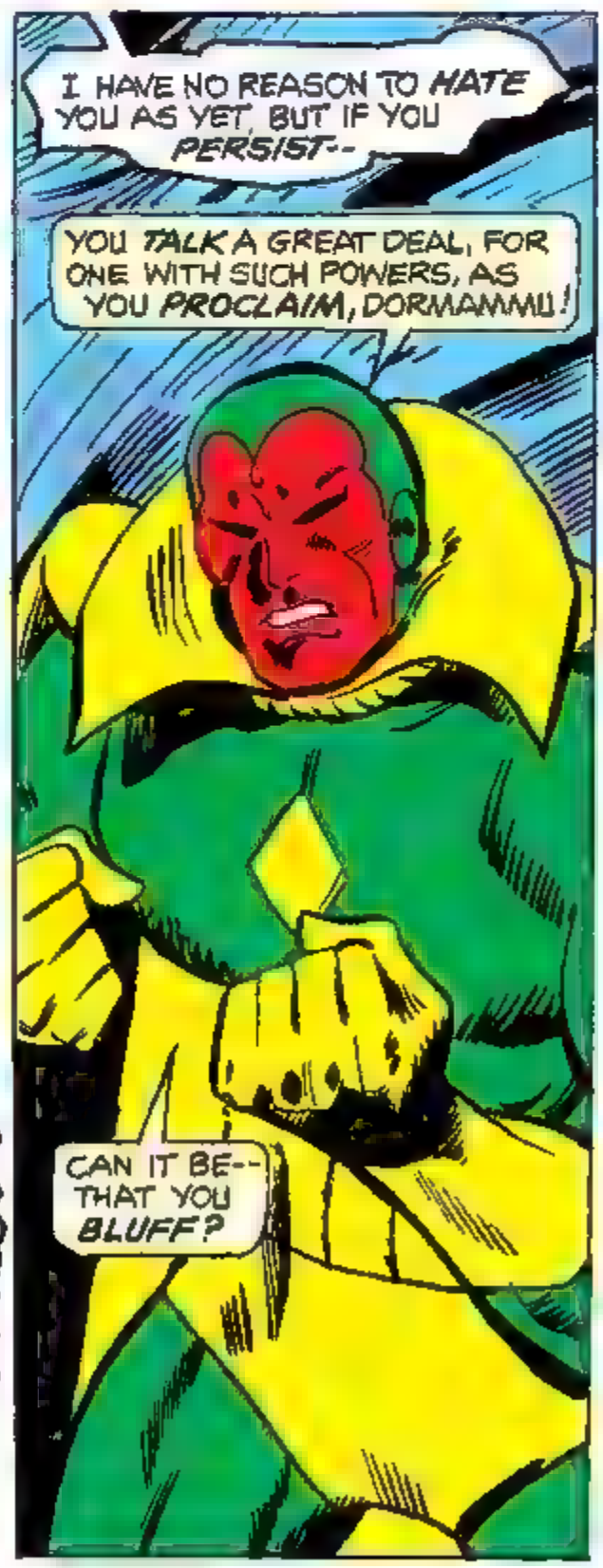
* EVERYBODY REMEMBERS OUR NON-TARNISH TRIO OF COMMUNIST COUNTER-PUNCHERS, CONSISTING OF (BACK TO FRONT) RADIOACTIVE MAN, CRIMSON DYNAMO, AND THE TITANIUM MAN, FROM AVENGERS #130 RIGHT?-- LEN.


"...KANG!"

YOU PLAN TO STAND AGAINST MY WILL, THEN, VISION? YOU, AN ANDROID--SOMETHING LESS THAN EVEN MAN--
--WILL STAND AGAINST A GOD?
YES!


BAH! THIS WOMAN IS NOT WORTH YOUR DEATH, AVENGER! SHE IS HEAD-STRONG--VERY HEAD-STRONG!
THOUGH THAT QUALITY LED HER TO DEFEAT ME ONE YEAR PAST--
--IT ALSO LED HER TO DISREGARD HER MISS HARKNESS'S WARNINGS--

--AND CALL UPON FORCES SHE COULD NOT CONTROL! EVEN WITH HER NEW KNOWLEDGE OF TRUE WITCHCRAFT--
--YOU CAN SEE THE RESULT!
FORGET HER, VISION! I KNOW NOT HOW YOU CAME HERE, BUT DEPART THE SAME WAY!


I HAVE NO REASON TO HATE YOU AS YET, BUT IF YOU PERSIST--
YOU TALK A GREAT DEAL, FOR ONE WITH SUCH POWERS, AS YOU PROCLAIM, DORMAMMU!
CAN IT BE--THAT YOU BLUFF?

BLUFF?

SUDDENLY, THEY ARE *THERE*-- MASSIVE, *GIBBERING* SHAPES HALF-GLIMPSED HERE AND THERE IN THE SHIMMERING, SULPHUROUS HAZE!

THEY WEREN'T THERE *BEFORE* -- THE VISION IS *CERTAIN* OF *THAT*--

-- BUT THEY'RE *SURGING* TOWARD HIM *NOW!*

FIRE STREAMS FROM THEIR MUZZLES-- A *LIQUID* THING, *UNLIKE* ANY FIRE OF *EARTHLY* ORIGIN! IT THUNDERS *HEAVILY* THROUGH THE SPACE OCCUPIED BY THE ANDROID--

--EAGER TO *CONSUME* HIM--

--BUT HE IS NOT TRULY *THERE!*

GREAT STRAIN CONTROLLING DENSITY. HEAT EXCITES ATOMS. MAKES PRECISION DIFFICULT. TIRING.

MORE: VOYAGE THROUGH TIME HAS PRECLUDED REPLENISHMENT OF SOLAR ENERGY. WEAKENING QUICKLY.

STOP! POSSIBLE *SOLUTION:* THIS BODY'S ABILITY TO ABSORB *ANY* FLAME TO CERTAIN LIMITS, WHEN IT HOUSED *HUMAN TORCH.*

THERE WAS NO ALTERATION IN PLASTOID *FLESH* DURING ULTRON'S RECONSTRUCTION --ONLY *SYSTEMS WITHIN.*

THUS, *PARTIAL SOLIDIFICATION,* AND GRADUAL OPENING OF *SOLAR JEWEL*--

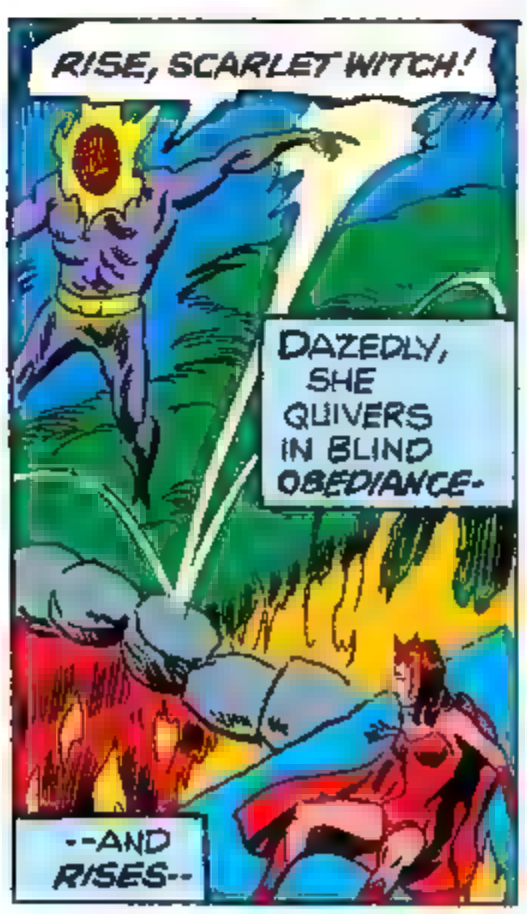
YES! I CAN ABSORB SOME ENERGY FROM THE DEMON'S SUPERNATURAL FLAME! I CAN ABSORB *ENOUGH*-

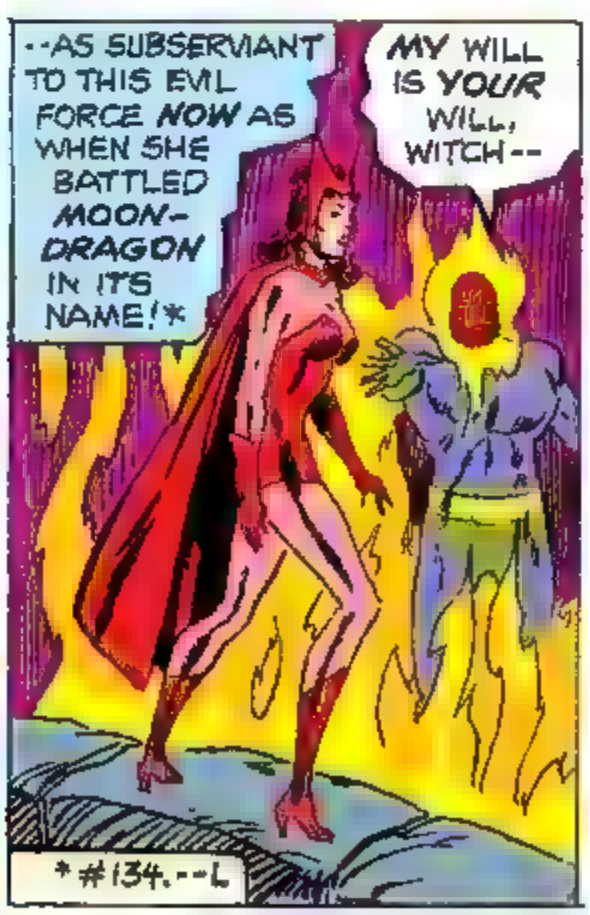
--TO *RETURN* IT AS A *SOLAR BLAST!*

NOW IT IS THE *DEMONS'* TURN TO SUFFER, FOR IT APPEARS THAT THEY CANNOT WITHSTAND *NATURAL* HEAT!

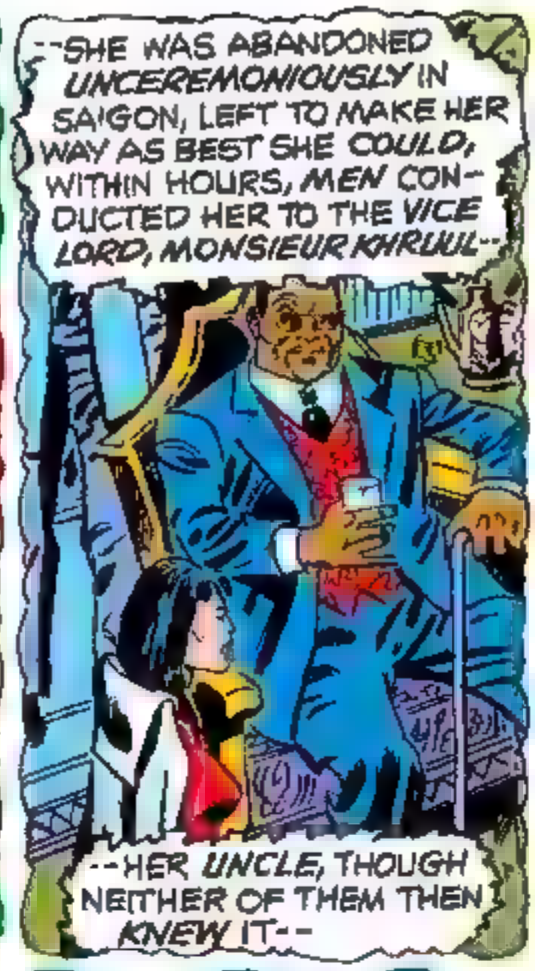
I HAVE BESTED YOUR *PAWNS*, DORMAMMU! *NOW* WHAT WILL YOU DO?

WHAT *WILL* YOU DO, BROTHER? ADMIT THAT YOU ARE BLUFFING--



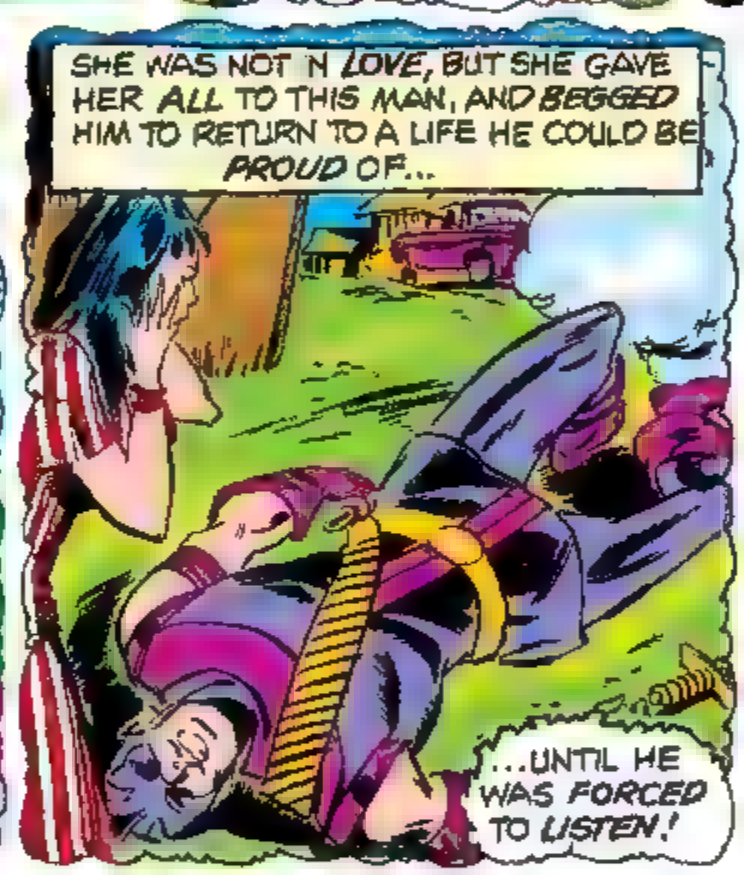


SIMULTANEOUSLY...
THE PRIESTS OF RAMA LED THEIR CHARGE FROM THEIR TEMPLE ON THE NIGHT OF HER EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY. DRESSED IN THE CLOTHING OF THE TIME--

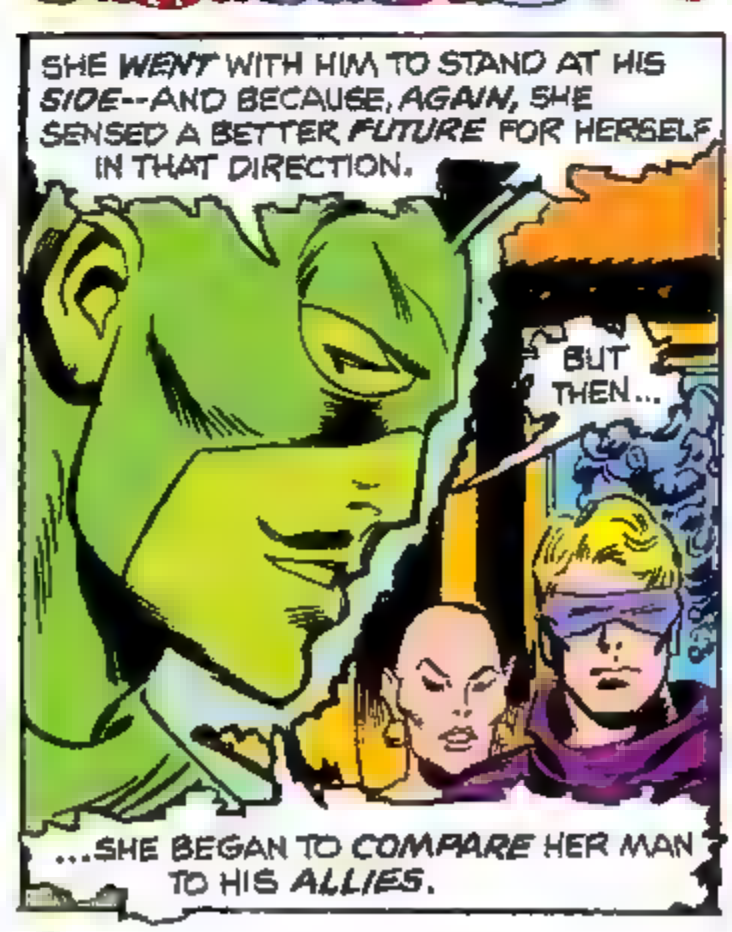

--SHE WAS ABANDONED UNCEREMONIOUSLY IN SAIGON, LEFT TO MAKE HER WAY AS BEST SHE COULD, WITHIN HOURS, MEN CONDUCTED HER TO THE VICE LORD, MONSIEUR KHRUUL--
--HER UNCLE, THOUGH NEITHER OF THEM THEN KNEW IT--

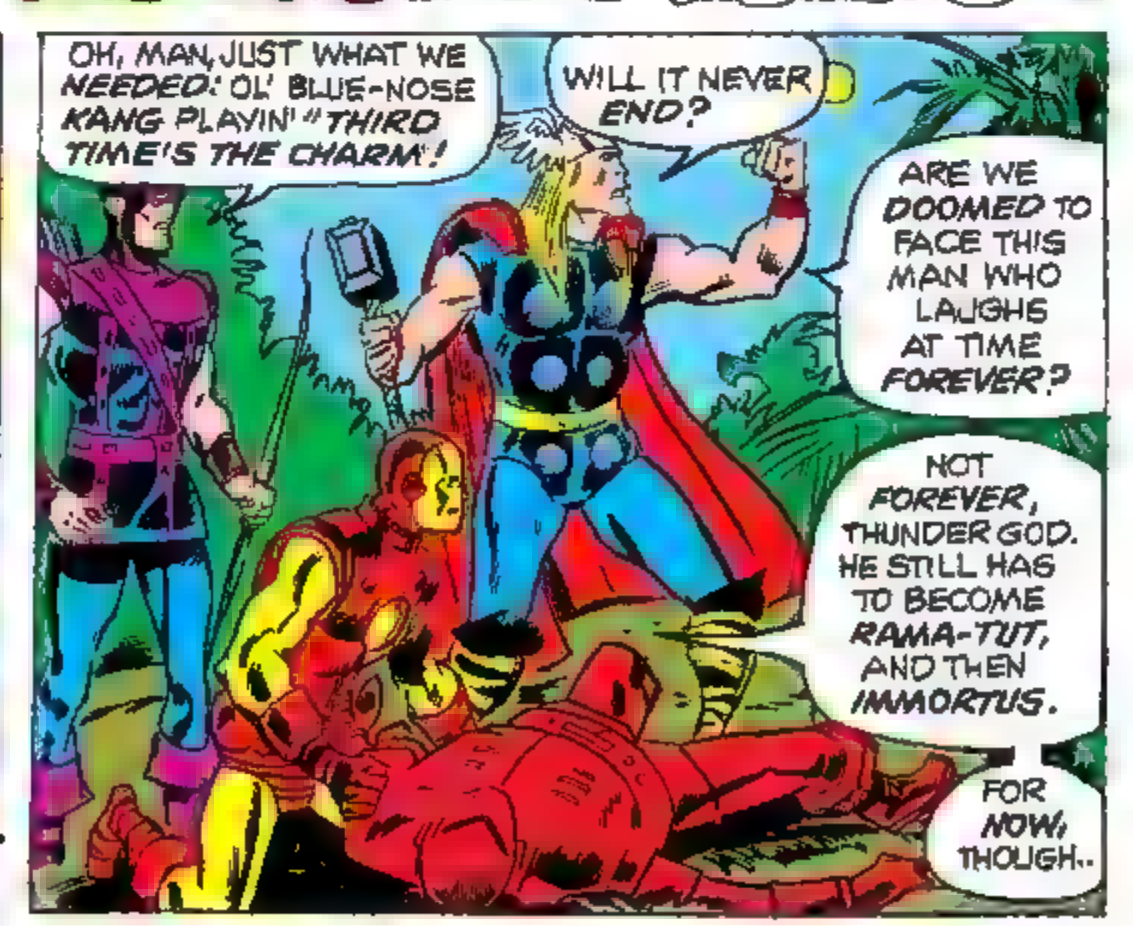
--AND THIS SUPPOSED "COUNTRY GIRL" WAS PUT TO WORK IN HIS WATERFRONT BARS, EARNING AMERICAN MONEY.
WITH HER MEMORY UNTROLBLED, SHE TOOK QUICKLY TO THE GAUDY GAME SO OFTEN PLAYED IN SAIGON...

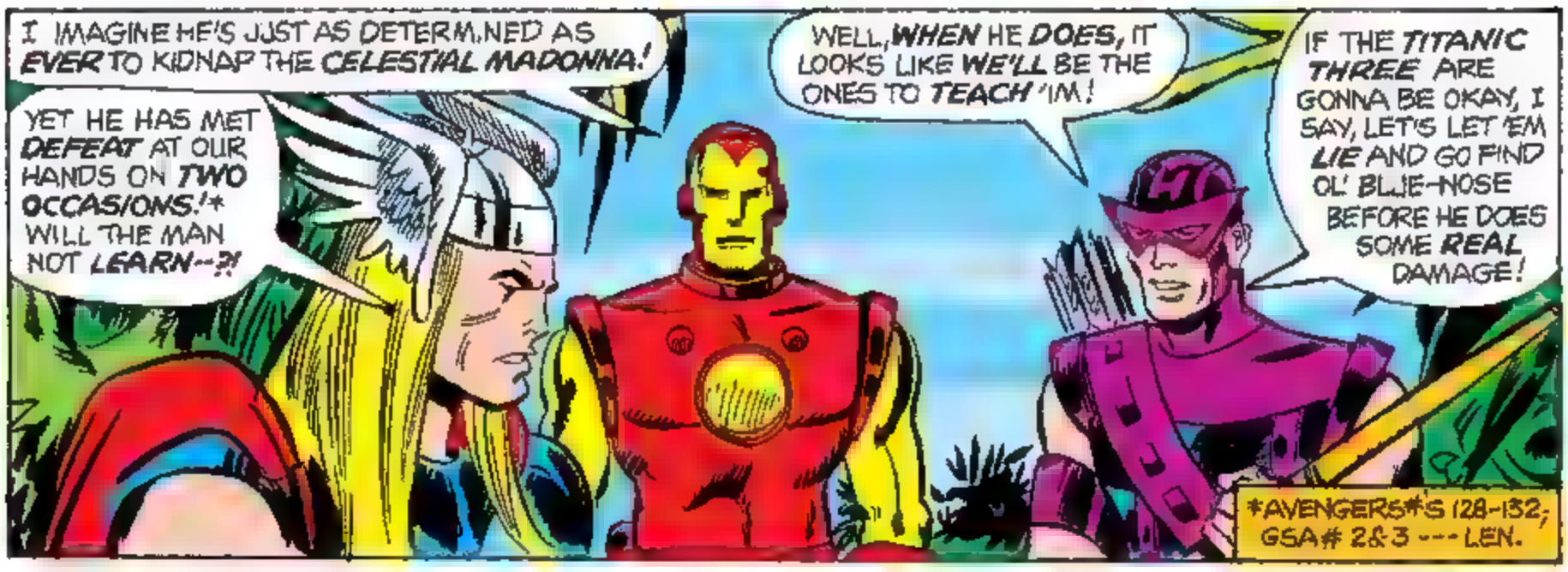
...AND IT WAS THE GAME WHICH LED HER TO APPROACH THE ONCE-DASHING SWORDSMAN.
HOWEVER, IT WAS THE FRAIL NOBILITY WITHIN HIS SOUL WHICH SPARKED A KINDRED FIRE IN HERS, AND LED HER TO REMAIN WITH HIM.

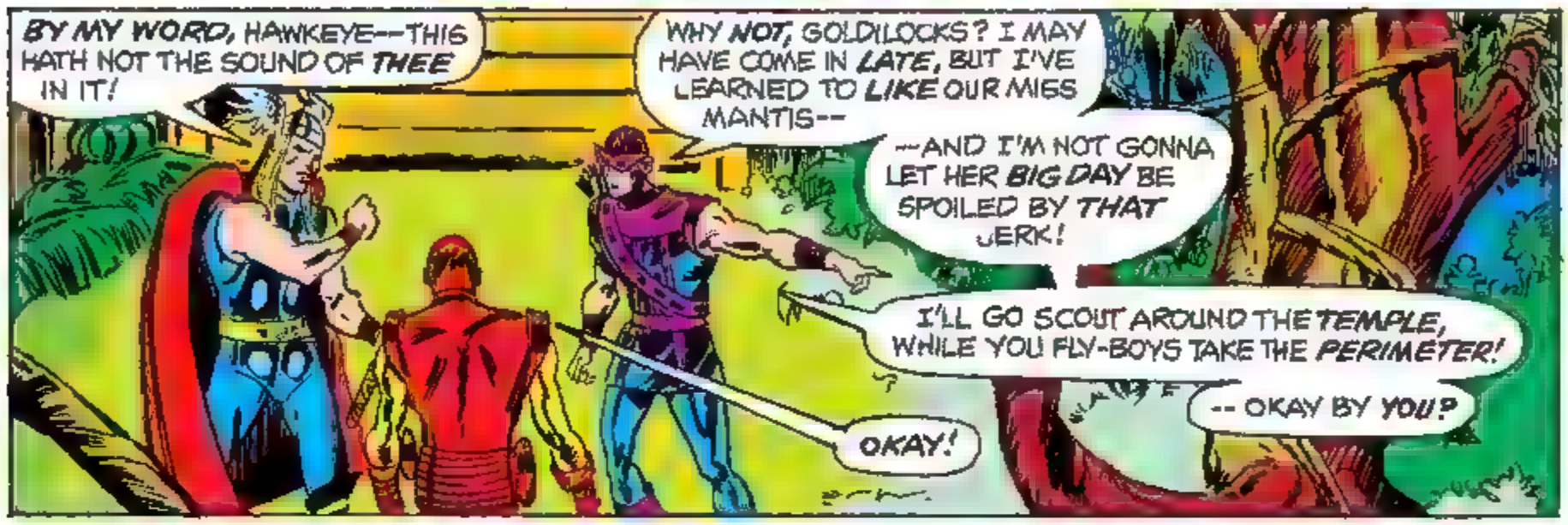

SHE WAS NOT IN LOVE, BUT SHE GAVE HER ALL TO THIS MAN, AND BEGGED HIM TO RETURN TO A LIFE HE COULD BE PROUD OF...
...UNTIL HE WAS FORCED TO LISTEN!

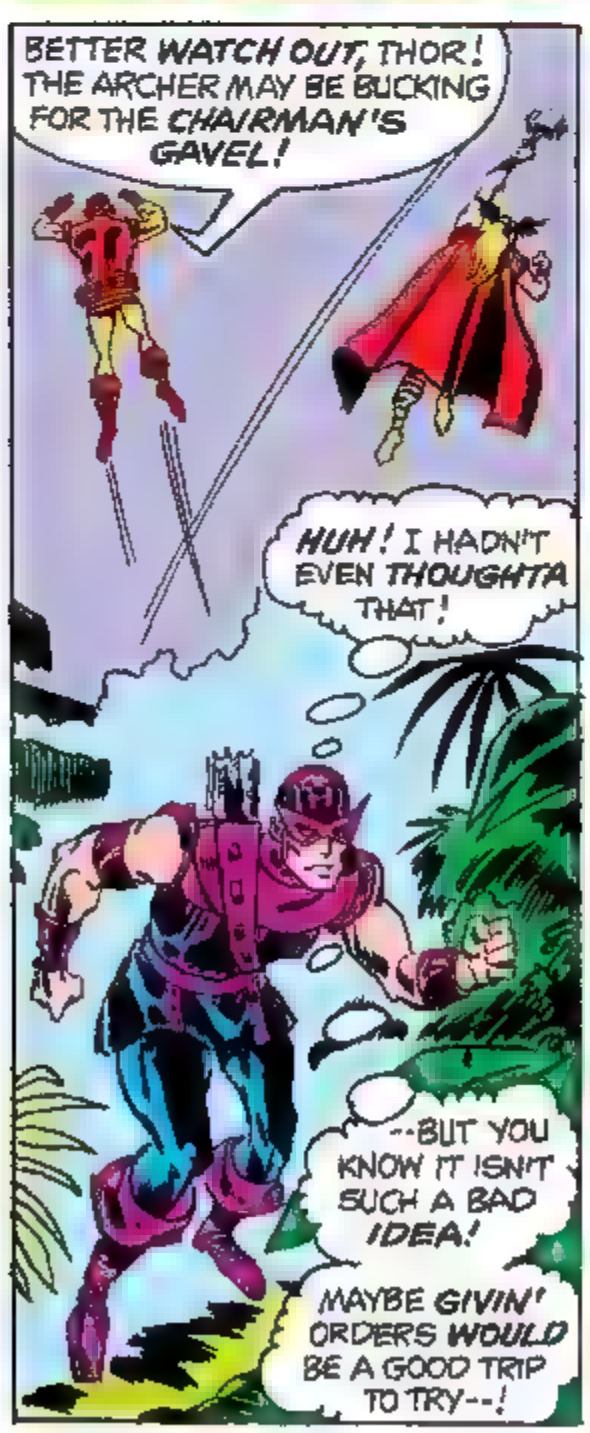
THAT WAS A TURNING POINT IN HER LIFE-- FOR THOUGH SHE WOULD HAVE LEARNED LIFE BY LIVING IT ANYWHERE--
--THE SWORDSMAN COULD OFFER HER LIFE WITH THE AVENGERS!

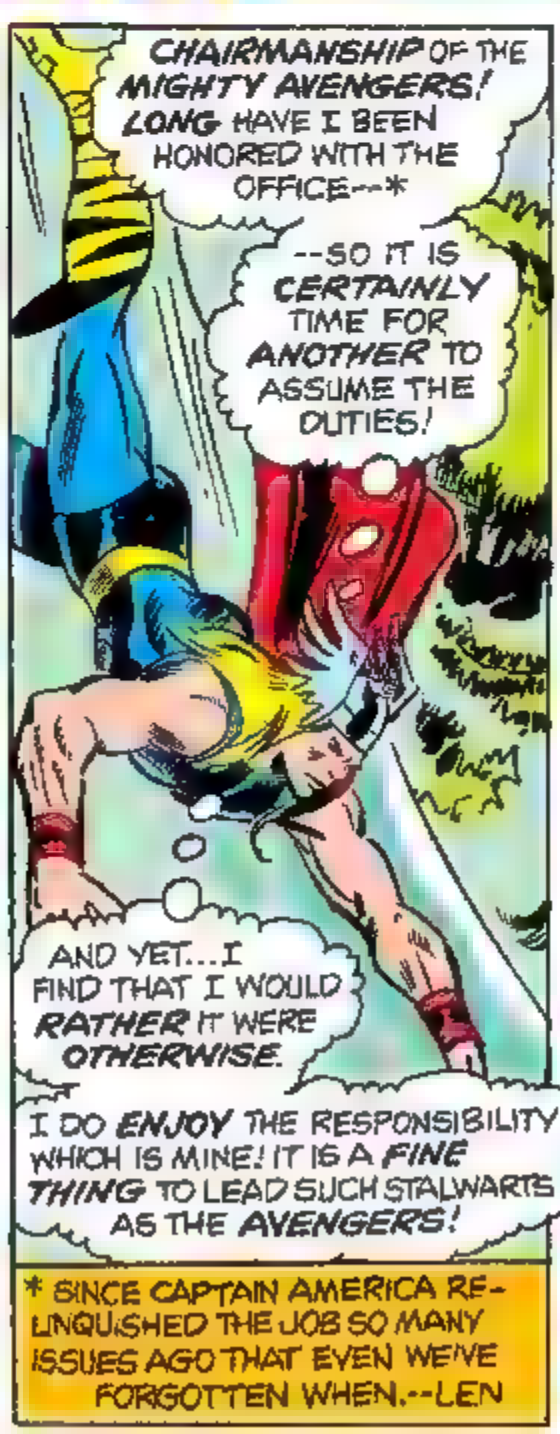

SHE WENT WITH HIM TO STAND AT HIS SIDE--AND BECAUSE, AGAIN, SHE SENSED A BETTER FUTURE FOR HERSELF IN THAT DIRECTION.
BUT THEN...
...SHE BEGAN TO COMPARE HER MAN TO HIS ALLIES.


OH, MAN, JUST WHAT WE NEEDED: OL' BLUE-NOSE KANG PLAYIN' "THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM"!
WILL IT NEVER END?
ARE WE DOOMED TO FACE THIS MAN WHO LAUGHS AT TIME FOREVER?
NOT FOREVER, THUNDER GOD. HE STILL HAS TO BECOME RAMA-TUT, AND THEN IMMORTUS.
FOR NOW, THOUGH..

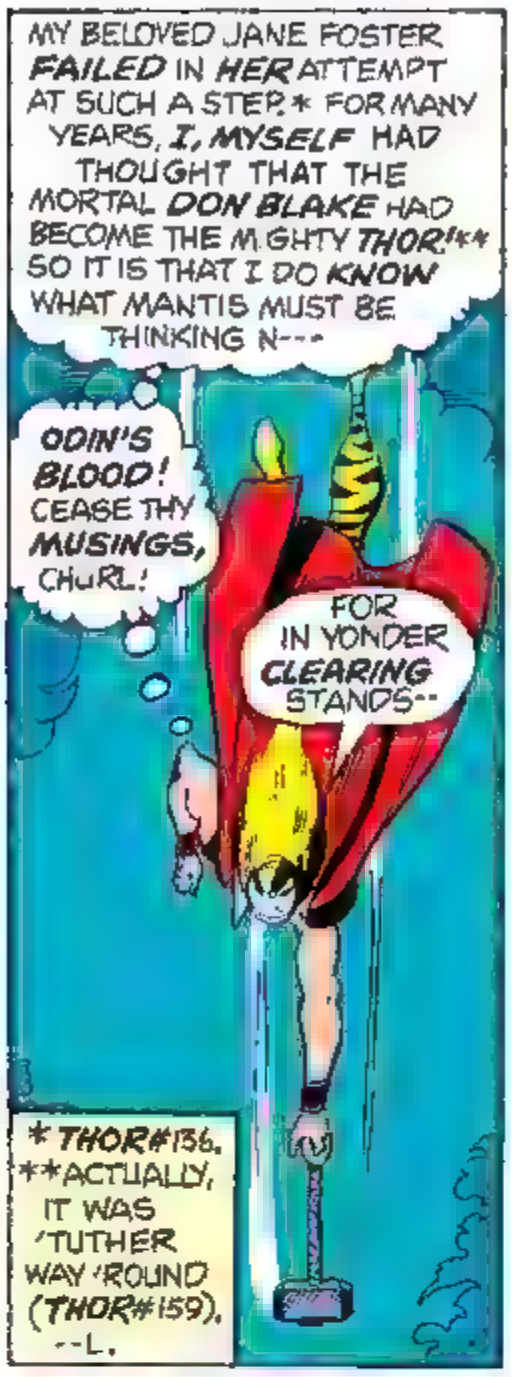

I IMAGINE HE'S JUST AS DETERMINED AS EVER TO KIDNAP THE CELESTIAL MADONNA!
YET HE HAS MET DEFEAT AT OUR HANDS ON TWO OCCASIONS!* WILL THE MAN NOT LEARN--?!
WELL, WHEN HE DOES, IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE THE ONES TO TEACH 'IM!
IF THE TITANIC THREE ARE GONNA BE OKAY, I SAY, LET'S LET 'EM LIE AND GO FIND OL' BLUE-NOSE BEFORE HE DOES SOME REAL DAMAGE!
*AVENGERS#'S 128-132; GSA# 2&3 --- LEN.

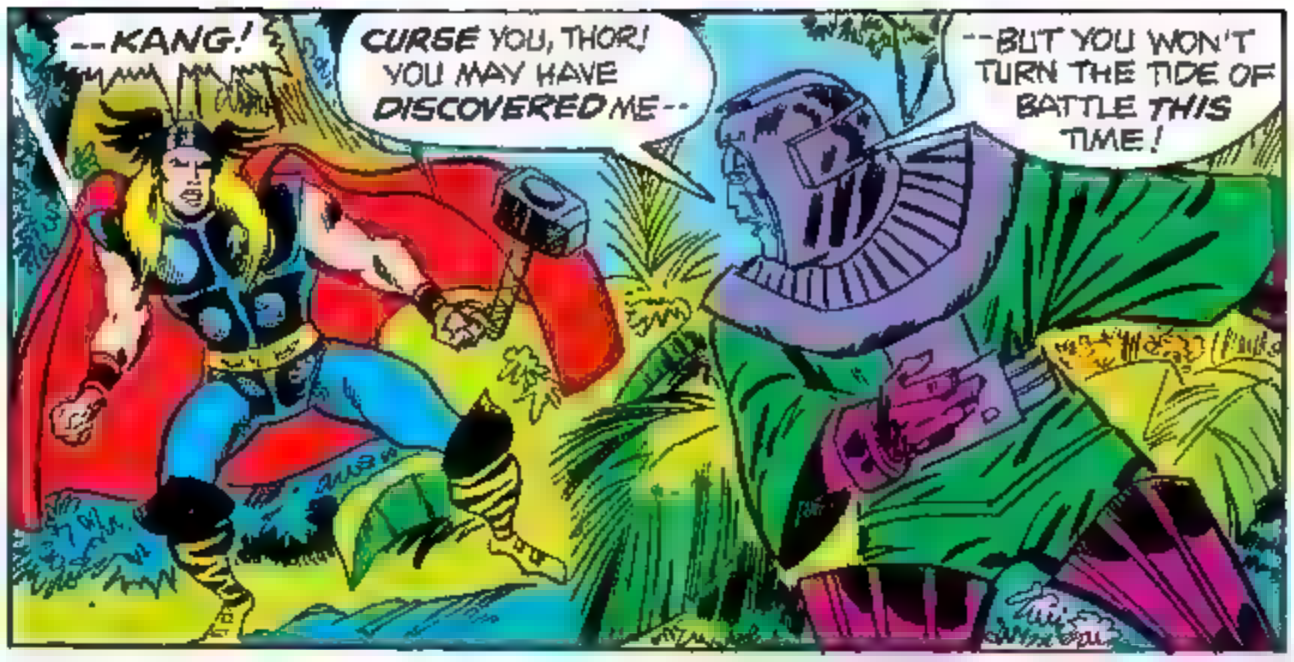

BY MY WORD, HAWKEYE--THIS HATH NOT THE SOUND OF THEE IN IT!
WHY NOT, GOLDILOCKS? I MAY HAVE COME IN LATE, BUT I'VE LEARNED TO LIKE OUR MISS MANTIS--
--AND I'M NOT GONNA LET HER BIG DAY BE SPOILED BY THAT JERK!
I'LL GO SCOUT AROUND THE TEMPLE, WHILE YOU FLY-BOYS TAKE THE PERIMETER!
-- OKAY BY YOU?
OKAY!


BETTER WATCH OUT, THOR! THE ARCHER MAY BE BUCKING FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S GAVEL!
HUH! I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHTA THAT!
--BUT YOU KNOW IT ISN'T SUCH A BAD IDEA!
MAYBE GIVIN' ORDERS WOULD BE A GOOD TRIP TO TRY--!

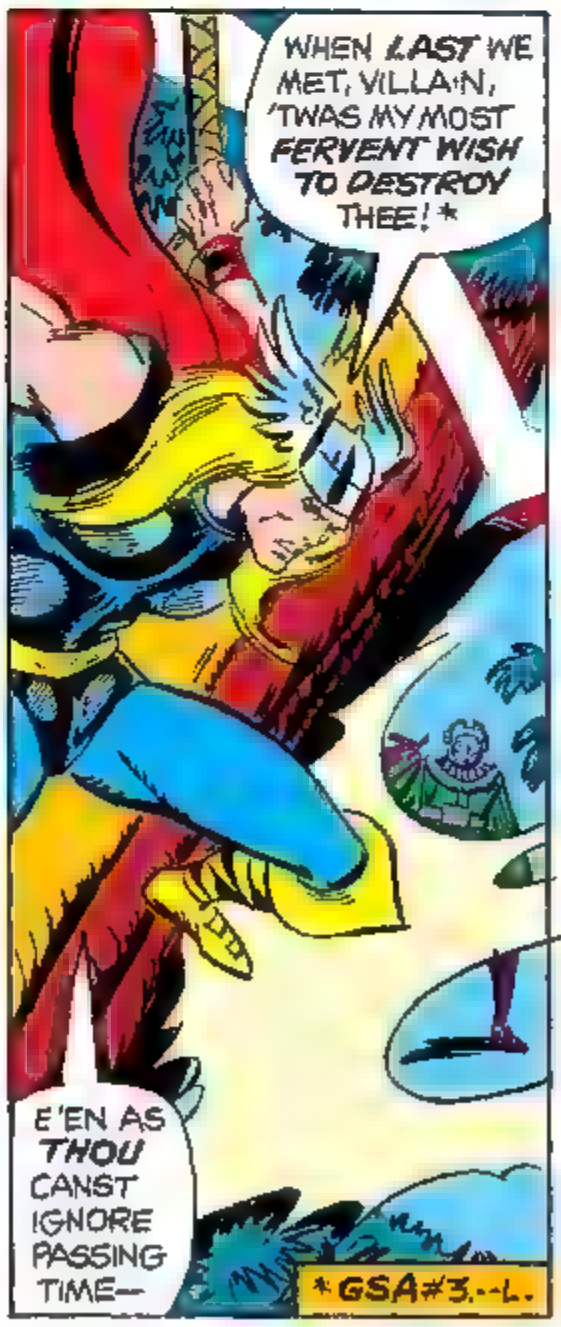

CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! LONG HAVE I BEEN HONORED WITH THE OFFICE--*
--SO IT IS CERTAINLY TIME FOR ANOTHER TO ASSUME THE DUTIES!
AND YET...I FIND THAT I WOULD RATHER IT WERE OTHERWISE.
I DO ENJOY THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH IS MINE! IT IS A FINE THING TO LEAD SUCH STALWARTS AS THE AVENGERS!
* SINCE CAPTAIN AMERICA RELINQUISHED THE JOB SO MANY ISSUES AGO THAT EVEN WE'VE FORGOTTEN WHEN.--LEN

SO SPEAKETH A VIKING GOD--YEA, A GOD OF THUNDER, WITH A CRAVING FOR GRAND COMBAT ON TUMULTUOUS FIELDS OF HONOR!
GODHOOD IS AN AWESOME THING--E'EN TO MYSELF NO BETTER UNDERSTOOD THAN MANKIND DOTH UNDERSTAND MANHOOD! AT TIMES, ONE DOTH BECOME MORE FORCE THAN SINGULAR SELF!
AND TODAY, 'TIS SAID THAT MANTIS--THAT STRANGE, ENIGMATIC EURASIAN--SHALL ASCEND INTO GODHOOD.

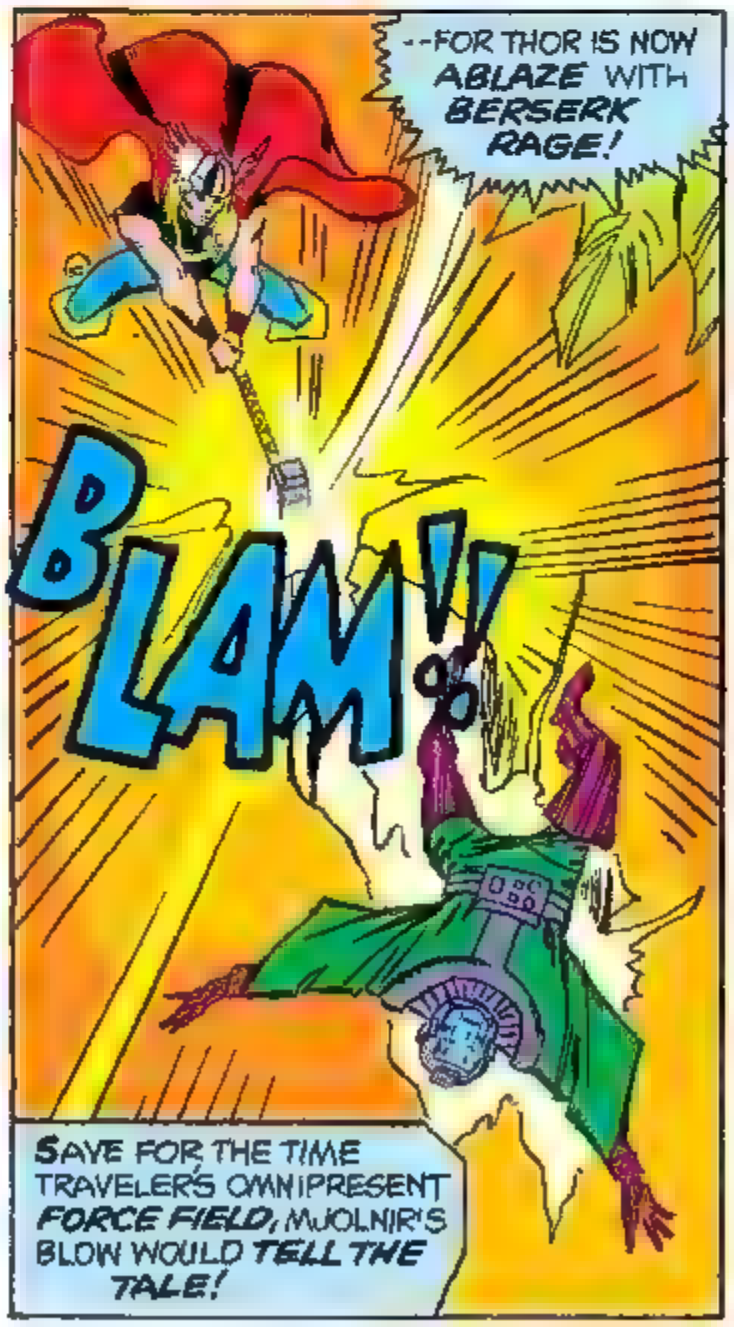

MY BELOVED JANE FOSTER FAILED IN HER ATTEMPT AT SUCH A STEP.* FOR MANY YEARS, I, MYSELF HAD THOUGHT THAT THE MORTAL DON BLAKE HAD BECOME THE MIGHTY THOR!** SO IT IS THAT I DO KNOW WHAT MANTIS MUST BE THINKING N---
ODIN'S BLOOD! CEASE THY MUSINGS, CHURL!
FOR IN YONDER CLEARING STANDS--
* THOR #136. **ACTUALLY, IT WAS 'TUTHER WAY 'ROUND (THOR #159). --L.


--KANG!
CURSE YOU, THOR! YOU MAY HAVE DISCOVERED ME--
--BUT YOU WON'T TURN THE TIDE OF BATTLE THIS TIME!

NOTHING CAN KEEP KANG THE CONQUEROR FROM THE CELESTIAL MADONNA! NOT TWO DEFEATS, NOR A THOUSAND!
AND NOT EVEN A THUNDER GOD--
--CAN WITHSTAND THE DISSOLUTION BEAM BUILT INTO MY UNIFORM!
NEVER AGAIN WILL I DEPEND UPON OTHERS, FOR OTHERS GIVE WAY TO WEAKNESS!


WHEN LAST WE MET, VILLAIN, 'TWAS MY MOST FERVENT WISH TO DESTROY THEE!*
E'EN AS THOU CANST IGNORE PASSING TIME--
* GSA #3.--L.

--SO, TOO, CAN THOR!
HIS RICH VOICE IS A BOOMING CHALLENGE--
--NOT ONLY TO KANG, BUT TO THE ELDER GODS, AS WELL--


--FOR THOR IS NOW ABLAZE WITH BERSERK RAGE!
BLAM!!
SAVE FOR THE TIME TRAVELER'S OMNIPRESENT FORCE FIELD, MJOLNIR'S BLOW WOULD TELL THE TALE!

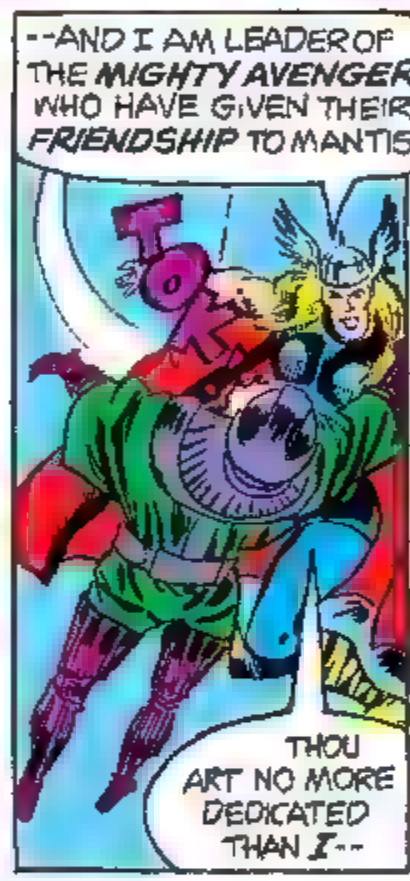
THOUGH KANG CAN STILL TAKE *TUMBLES* IN IT, THAT FORCE FIELD HAS KEPT HIM FROM DEATH MORE TIMES THAN HE CAN *COUNT!*

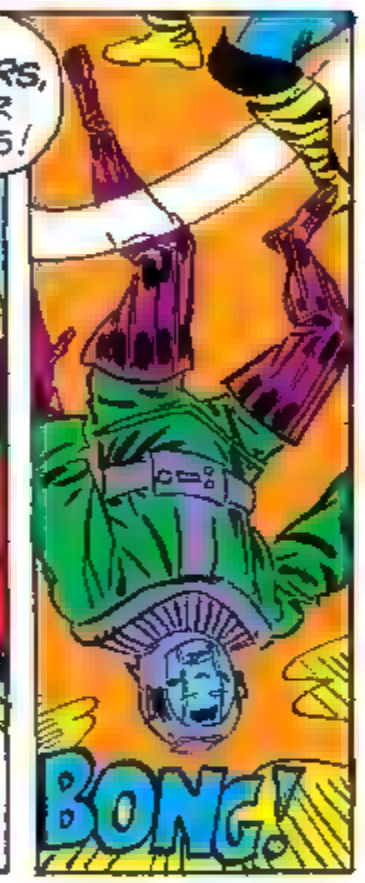
NOW, THOR, LET *ME* UTILIZE YOUR HAMMER FOR A MOMENT--

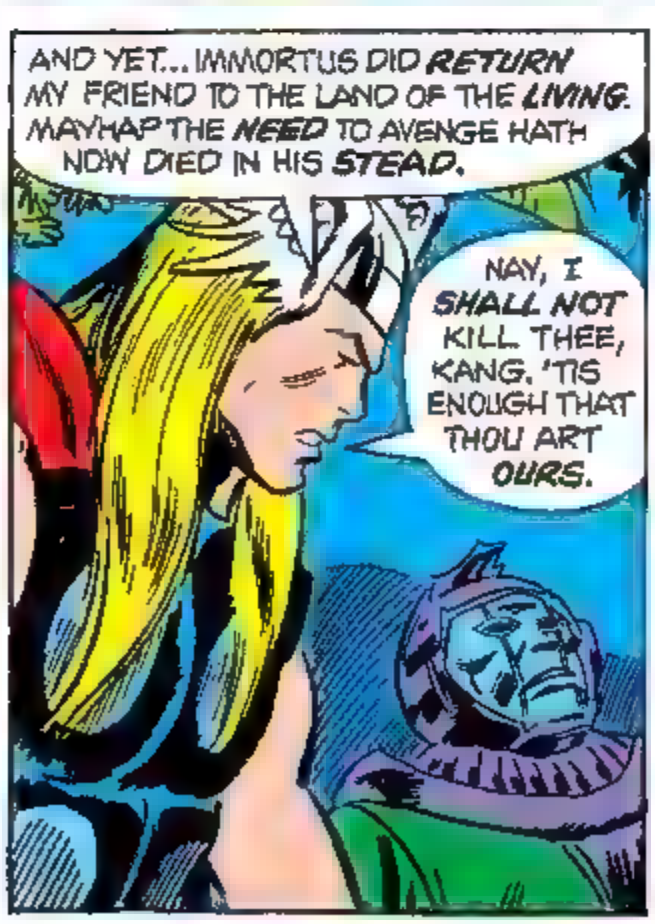
--JUST LONG ENOUGH TO LET IT CONDUCT THE *FULL FORCE* OF MY DISSOLUTION RAY INTO YOUR WRITHING BODY!

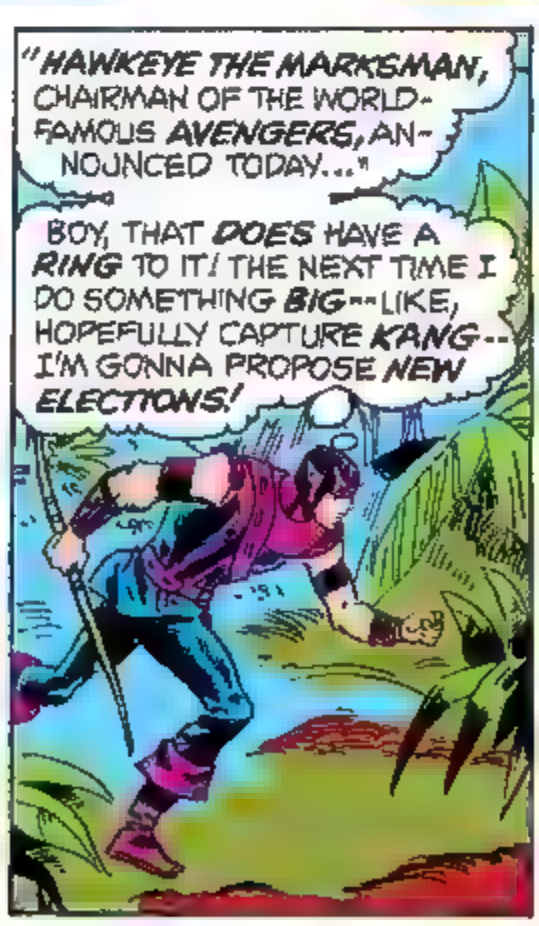
THUS YOU *DIE* BEFORE MY *41ST CENTURY SCIENCE!* EVERYONE SAVE KANG HAS *SOME* WEAKNESS--

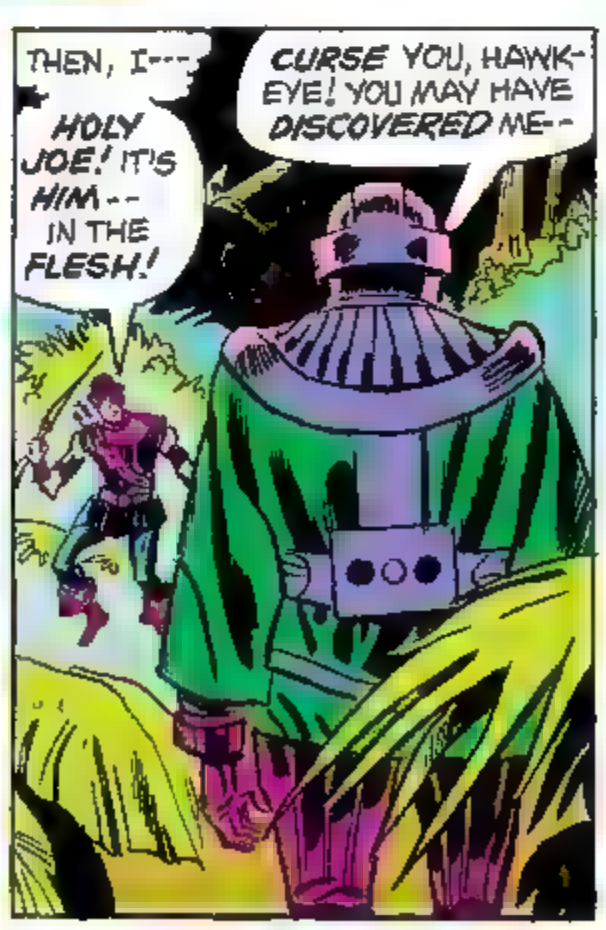
--BUT *KANG* SHALL BE *STRONG FOREVER!*

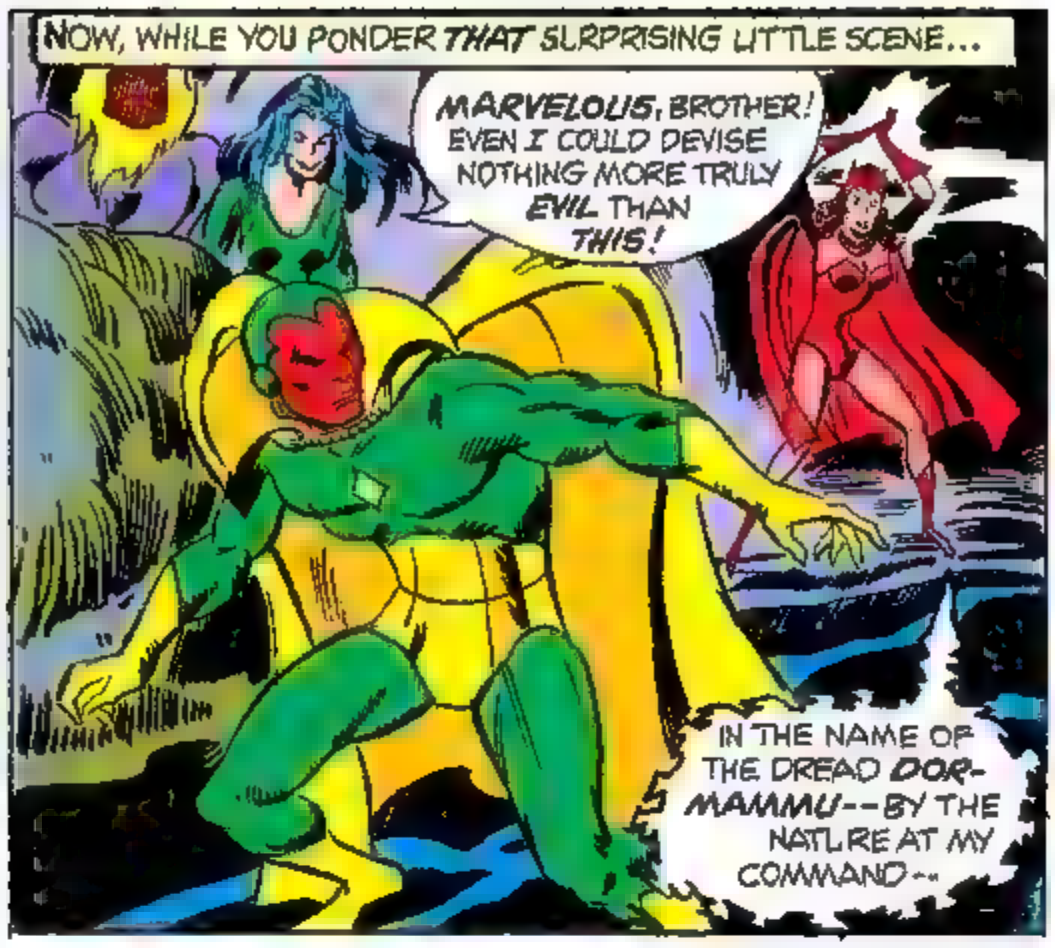




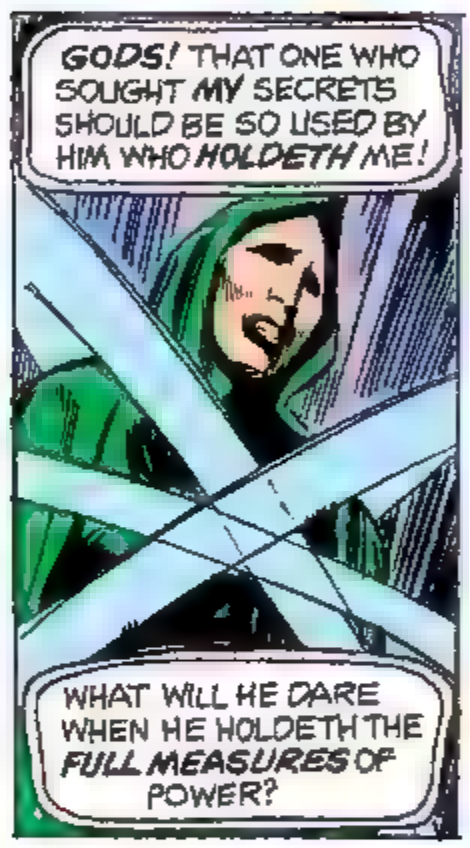


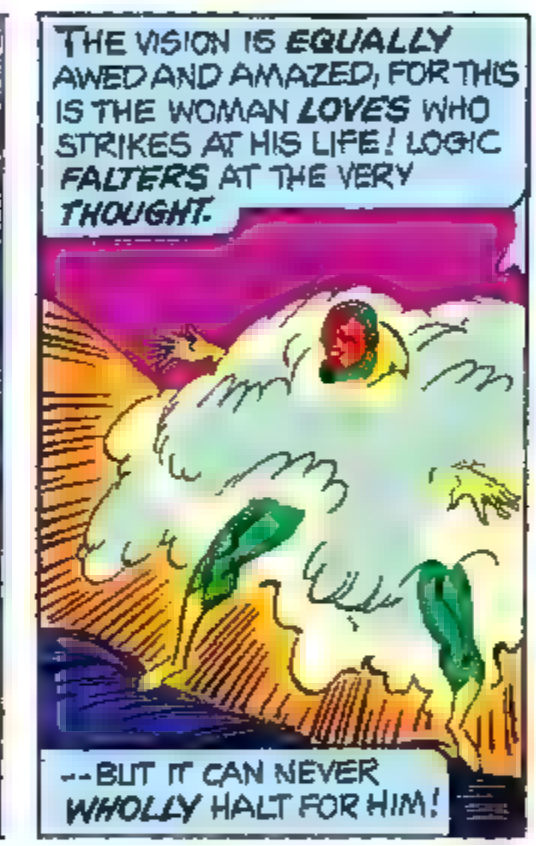





NOW, WHILE YOU PONDER THAT SURPRISING LITTLE SCENE...
MARVELOUS, BROTHER! EVEN I COULD DEVISE NOTHING MORE TRULY EVIL THAN THIS!
IN THE NAME OF THE DREAD DOR-MAMMU--BY THE NATURE AT MY COMMAND--

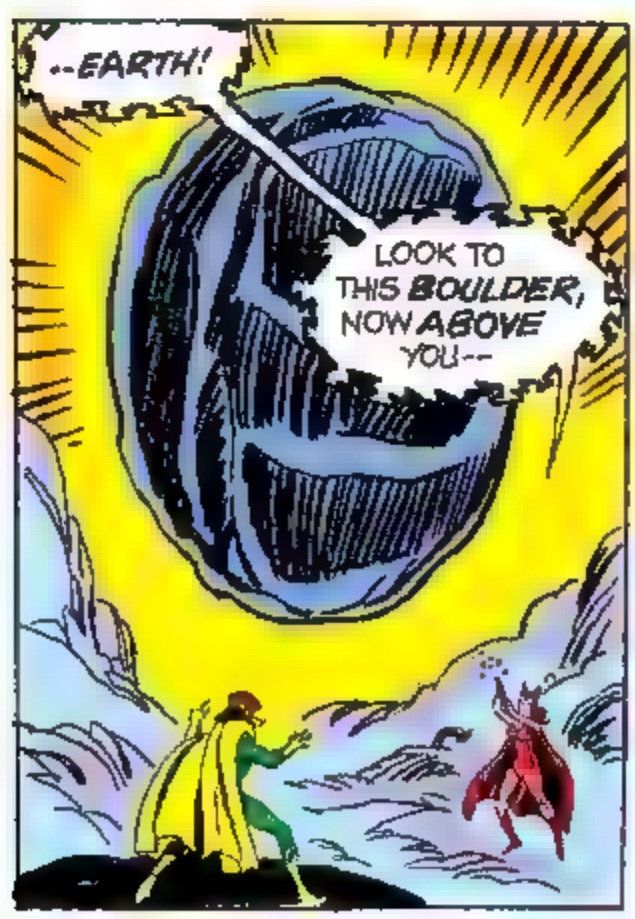
--LET THE MOLTEN LAVA SURROUNDING US BOIL AND BURY THIS CREATURE WHO MOLESTS MY MASTER!
SHE'S NOT HOLDING BACK! SHE'S TRULY IN HIS POWER!

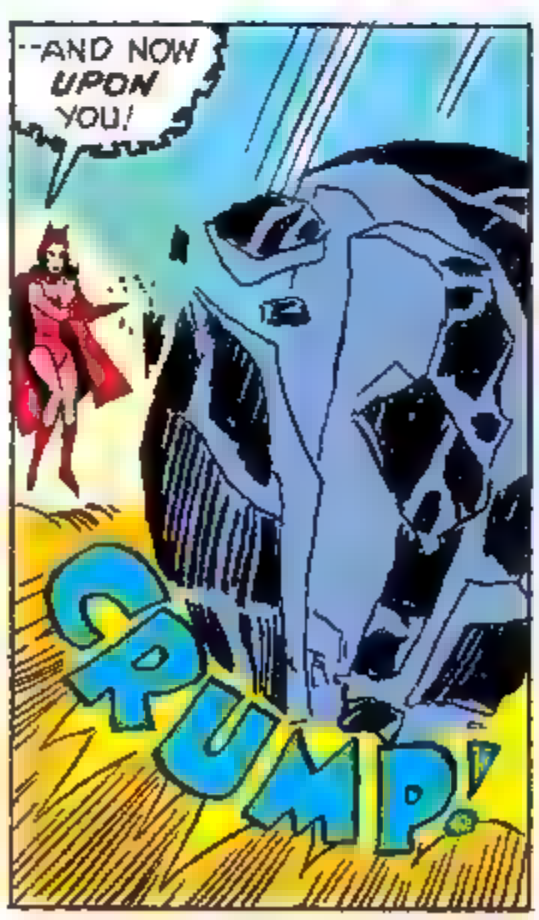

GODS! THAT ONE WHO SOUGHT MY SECRETS SHOULD BE SO USED BY HIM WHO HOLDETH ME!
WHAT WILL HE DARE WHEN HE HOLDETH THE FULL MEASURES OF POWER?


THE VISION IS EQUALLY AWED AND AMAZED, FOR THIS IS THE WOMAN LOVES WHO STRIKES AT HIS LIFE! LOGIC FALTERS AT THE VERY THOUGHT.
--BUT IT CAN NEVER WHOLLY HALT FOR HIM!

EVEN AS HE VANISHES IN A WELTER OF FIRE, HE BECOMES SOLID--SO SOLID AS TO CONTROL EVERY ATOM IN HIS FORM!
LIKE A DIAMOND, HE CANNOT BURN!

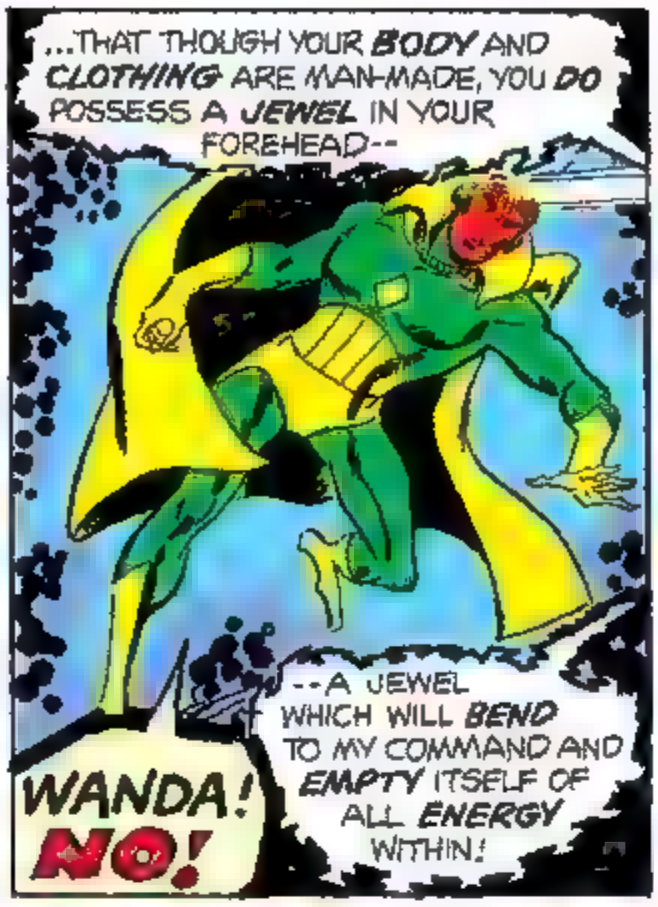
MISS HARKNESS TAUGHT ME WELL, CREATURE! I HAVE OTHER WEAPONS!
ALL THINGS ORGANIC BOW TO MY WILL, WHETHER THEY BE OF FIRE, AIR, WATER, OR--


--EARTH!
LOOK TO THIS BOULDER, NOW ABOVE YOU--


--AND NOW UPON YOU!
CRUMP!

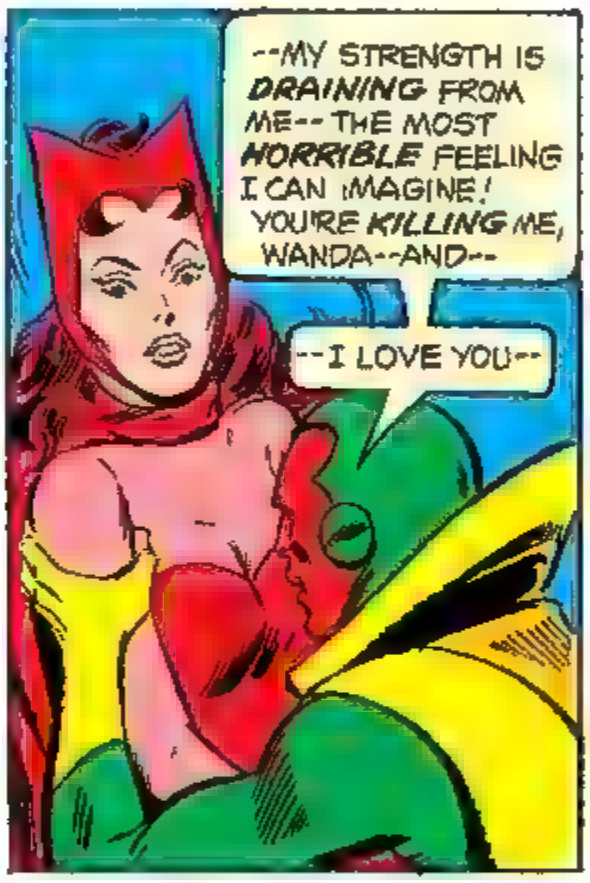
BUT I HAVE ONLY TO BECOME INTANGIBLE TO RISE THROUGH STONE, WANDA!
I CAN COUNTER ALL OF YOUR ORGANIC POWERS, BECAUSE I AM A MAN OF SYNTHETICS!

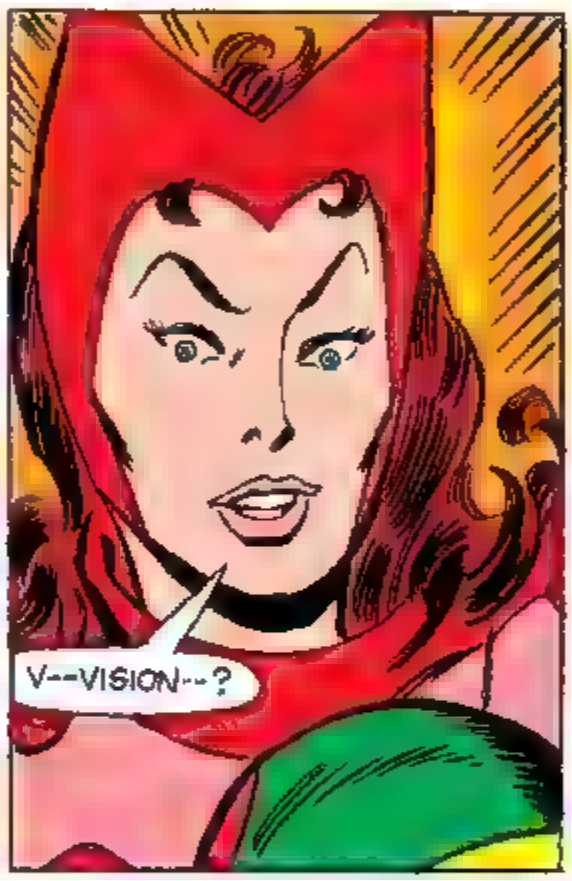
YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT, WANDA! YOU MUST REMEMBER ME!
I REMEMBER...

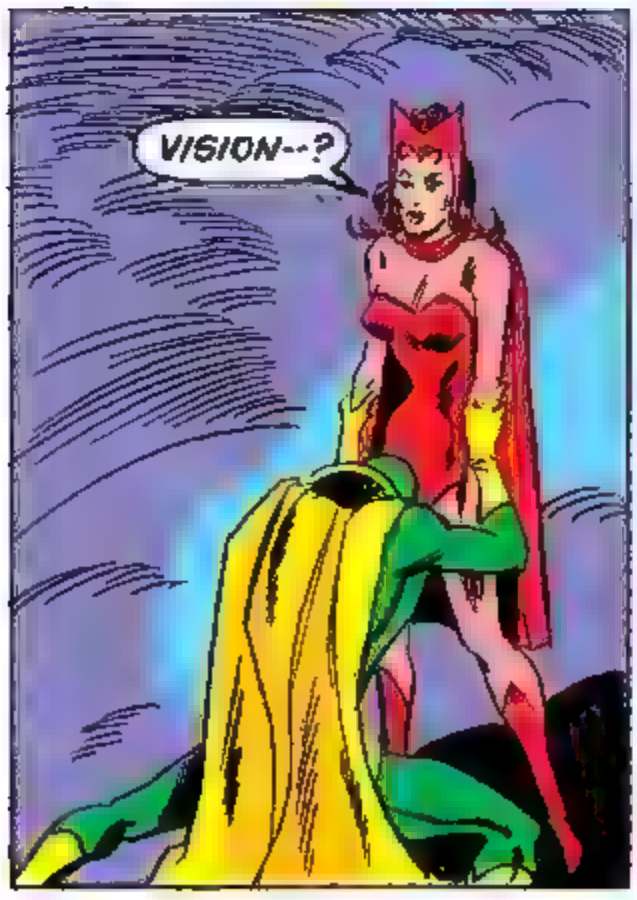

...THAT THOUGH YOUR BODY AND CLOTHING ARE MAN-MADE, YOU DO POSSESS A JEWEL IN YOUR FOREHEAD--
WANDA! NO!
--A JEWEL WHICH WILL BEND TO MY COMMAND AND EMPTY ITSELF OF ALL ENERGY WITHIN!

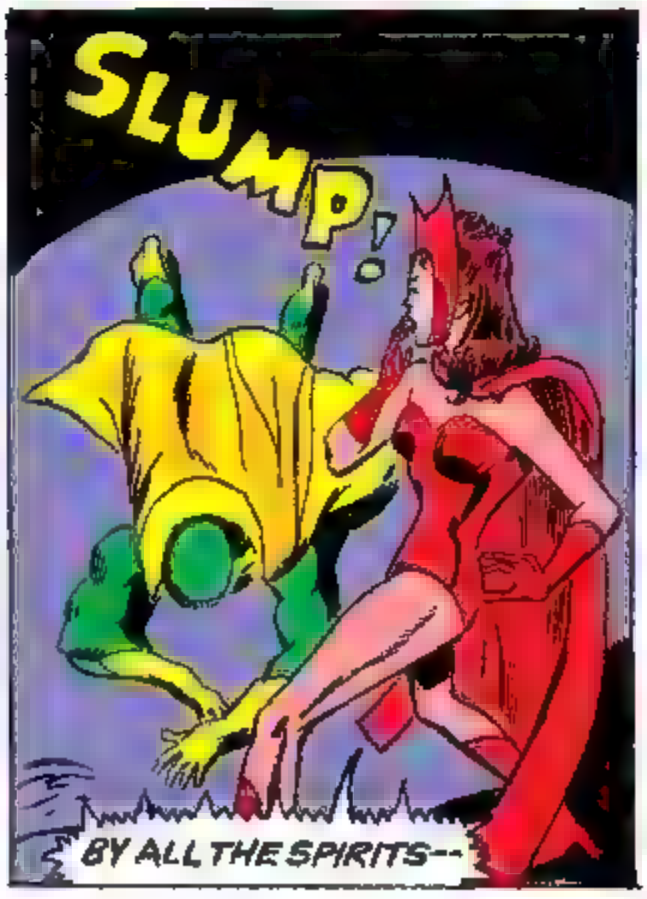
YOUR MAGIC-- HAS BEATEN ME! I HAVE NO WAY--
--TO CONSCIOUSLY CONTROL MY GEM!

WANDA--ONLY YOU CAN SAVE ME NOW! YOU MUST REMEMBER--WHO YOU ARE-- WHO I AM!
WANDA--


--MY STRENGTH IS DRAINING FROM ME-- THE MOST HORRIBLE FEELING I CAN IMAGINE! YOU'RE KILLING ME, WANDA--AND--
--I LOVE YOU--


V--VISION--?


VISION--?


SLUMP!
BY ALL THE SPIRITS--

--WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

BREAK:

YOU KNEW *NOTHING* OF *LOVE* WHEN YOU CAME TO THE AVENGERS, MANTIS, BUT THEY HELPED *TEACH* YOU, ALL *UNKNOWING*.

FOR THE *FIRST TIME*, YOU SAW *OTHERS* WITH THE NOBILITY OF THE SWORDSMAN...AND YOUR *HEAD* WAS TURNED.

PLEASE--WHATEVER YOU MAY BE--IT IS *TOO MUCH* TO HEAR OF MY SHAME FROM *YOUR LIPS*, SO LIKE THE ONES THIS ONE *BETRAYED!*

HE SPEAKS NOT OF *BETRAYAL*, MANTIS.

NO, DAUGHTER... HE SPEAKS OF EXPLORING THE *LIMITS* OF YOUR HUMANITY...

...YOUR ATTRACTION TO *GLAMOR*, YOUR *COMPETITIVENESS*, YOUR *SELFISHNESS*, *LONELINESS*, *LUST*--ALL THAT WHICH *PASSES* FOR LOVE AND IS *NOT*.

FOR ALL THAT YOU HAD *LEARNED*, YOU COULD NOT *LOVE* WITH SO MUCH OF YOU STILL *BOTTLED UP* INSIDE. THUS, THERE CAME A TIME WHEN YOU NEEDED TO LEARN THAT THERE WAS *MORE* TO LEARN ABOUT LIFE.

YOU ARE SAYING THAT THIS ONE COULD NOT BE *ONLY* A PRIESTESS OR *ONLY* A CREATURE OF IMPULSE.

EXACTLY...AND WHO BETTER TO *TEACH* YOU THAN *LIBRA*, THE *BALANCE?* AS A CHIEFTAIN IN AN INTERNATIONAL *CRIME-CARTEL*, I WAS ALWAYS ASSURED I COULD *ENCOUNTER* YOU, NO MATTER *WHERE* YOU WERE OR WHAT YOU WERE *DOING*.

YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE *AVENGERS* WAS ONE OF THOSE COINCIDENCES THAT PROBABLY *WASN'T*, AND *SIMPLIFIED* THE SITUATION IMMEASURABLY. I TOLD *TAURUS* OF YOUR "*EMPATHIC NATURE*," AND HE SAW A CHANCE OF DEFEATING OLD *FOES*.*

THEN, AFTER HE *FAILED* (AS I *KNEW* HE WOULD AGAINST SUCH OPPONENTS), I RELATED ENOUGH OF YOUR *PAST* TO MAKE YOU *QUESTION* YOUR *LIFE*.

YOU WERE TOO *STRONG* TO RELINQUISH YOURSELF *EASILY*...

*#120.--L.

...BUT WHEN YOU GRASPED FOR THE *VISION*, A PILLAR OF *STABILITY* AND YET A MAN *UNALTERABLY* IN LOVE WITH *ANOTHER*, YOU *INSURED* THAT YOUR LIFE OF FRIVOLITY WOULD *END*...THAT YOU WOULD AWAKEN TO A MORE *COMPLETE* CONCEPTION OF EXISTENCE...

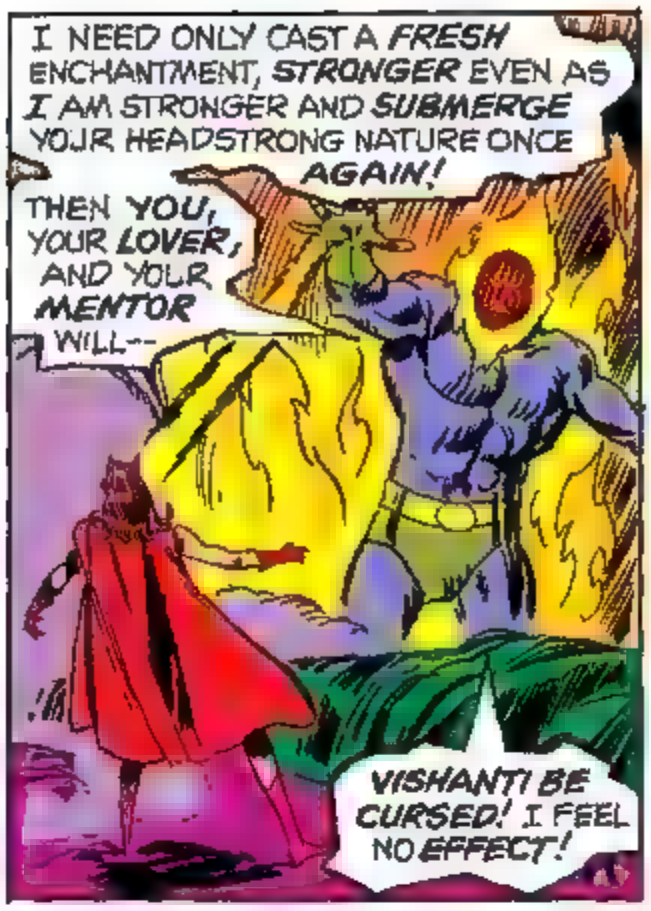
CURSE YOU, DORMAMMU! I'M *FREE* OF YOUR HELLISH *SPELLS* NOW--

--AND I'LL MAKE YOU *PAY* FOR WHAT YOU MADE ME DO!

YOU IMPUDENT *HUMAN*--

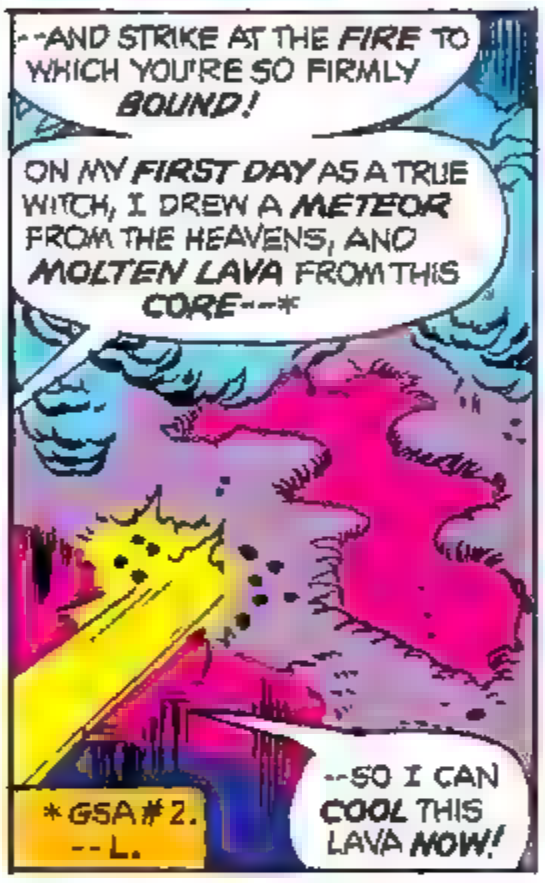
--YOU WERE *BROUGHT* HERE TO SUFFER MY *VENGEANCE*, AS A MEANS OF OCCUPYING MY TIME UNTIL I CAN ATTACK *ALL* THE EARTH--

--AND *THAT* IS ALL *YOU* SHALL DO TODAY!

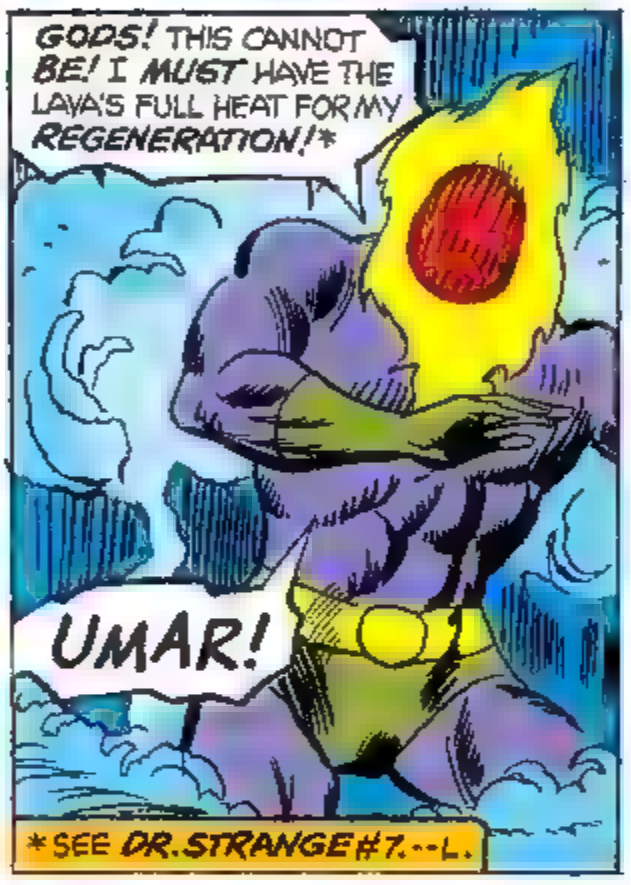

I NEED ONLY CAST A FRESH ENCHANTMENT, STRONGER EVEN AS I AM STRONGER AND SUBMERGE YOUR HEADSTRONG NATURE ONCE AGAIN!
THEN YOU, YOUR LOVER, AND YOUR MENTOR WILL--
VISHANTI BE CURSED! I FEEL NO EFFECT!

DID YOU THINK THAT MY WANDA WOULD FAIL TO FREE ME FROM YOUR SORCERY WHEN SHE AWAKENED, DREAD ONE? SHE HAS BEEN AN AVENGER TOO LONG FOR SUCH SELFISHNESS!
AND I AM MORE LEARNED THAN SHE OR CLEA--
--SO I CAN RETURN HER SOLICITUDE AND PROTECT HER FROM YOU!

AT LEAST, LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO MAKE USE OF MY POWER OVER THE ORGANIC ONE FINAL TIME--


--AND STRIKE AT THE FIRE TO WHICH YOU'RE SO FIRMLY BOUND!
ON MY FIRST DAY AS A TRUE WITCH, I DREW A METEOR FROM THE HEAVENS, AND MOLTEN LAVA FROM THIS CORE---*
--SO I CAN COOL THIS LAVA NOW!
*GSA #2. --L.

ALL I NEED IS SUFFICIENT CAUSE--
--AND YOU'VE CERTAINLY GIVEN ME THAT!


GODS! THIS CANNOT BE! I MUST HAVE THE LAVA'S FULL HEAT FOR MY REGENERATION!*
UMAR!
*SEE DR. STRANGE #7.--L.

AT YOUR SIDE, MY BROTHER.
HIS GROWTH MUST NOT BE HALTED, FOR THOUGH HE KNOWS IT NOT--
--I HAVE PLANS FOR HIS POWER MYSELF!
I'LL PLAY THE OLD ONE!

YOU'LL DO NO SUCH THING, WOMAN--
--FOR SINCE, UNLIKE YOUR BROTHER, YOU ARE NOT A CREATURE OF PURE FORCE--
--AND ANIMATE, INSTEAD, A HUMANOID FORM--

--YOU SHALL FEEL THE POWER OF THE VISION!
--OR DID YOU THINK WANDA WOULD HELP MISS HARKNESS AND FORGET ME?
PAIN! HUMAN PAIN!
AAAA

THE GODDESS IN THE MYSTIC BONDS BURSTS WITH MELLOW JOY! SHE HAS KNOWN FROM THE START THAT ONLY DR. STRANGE, THE SORCERER SUPREME, COULD WIN HER FREEDOM--

--BUT ANY MOTHER REVELS IN HER CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENTS!

CEASE! DESIST! I CAN AFFORD NO FURTHER HEAT LOSS!

I SUE FOR PEACE BETWEEN US!

YOU CAVE IN QUICKLY, FOR ONE WHO WAS SO BLOODTHIRSTY BEFORE!

HOW DO I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU?

ASK OF ME WHAT YOU WILL, WITCH!

ALL RIGHT! I WANT YOUR WORD, THAT THE VISION, MISS HARKNESS AND I CAN RETURN TO EARTH'S SURFACE WITHOUT FURTHER FEAR OF YOU OR YOUR SISTER--

--I WANT YOUR WORD THAT YOU'LL FREE THE EARTH SPIRIT--

--AND I WANT YOUR WORD THAT YOU'LL ABANDON YOUR PLANS TO CONQUER EARTH'S DIMENSION!

YOU TRY ME GREATLY, WITCH-- BUT--SO BE IT!

FOOL! I KEPT A SIMILAR VOW TO DR. STRANGE, FOR I OWED HIM A DEBT AT THE TIME*--BUT I OWE YOU ONLY HATRED!

YOU SHALL LEAVE IN PEACE, TO ALLAY YOUR SUSPICIONS--

--BUT WHEN I RISE FROM THIS PIT, YOU SHALL REGRET YOUR TRUST OF ME!

* STRANGE TALES #127/ DR. STRANGE #3.--L.

AND RISE HE WILL, IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF DR. STRANGE! HOWEVER, RIGHT NOW--

NOTHING CAN KEEP KANG, THE CONQUEROR FROM THE CELESTIAL MADONNA!

I DON'T LIKE BEIN' CALLED NOTHIN,' BLUE-NOSE--

--NOT WHILE I CAN GIVE YOU THE SHAFT LIKE SO!

CAN YOU, ARCHER? WHAT GOOD IS EVEN AN EXPLOSIVE ARROW AGAINST A MAN WITH A DISSOLUTION BEAM--

--AND A FORCE FIELD TO PROTECT HIM FROM ITS EFFECTS?

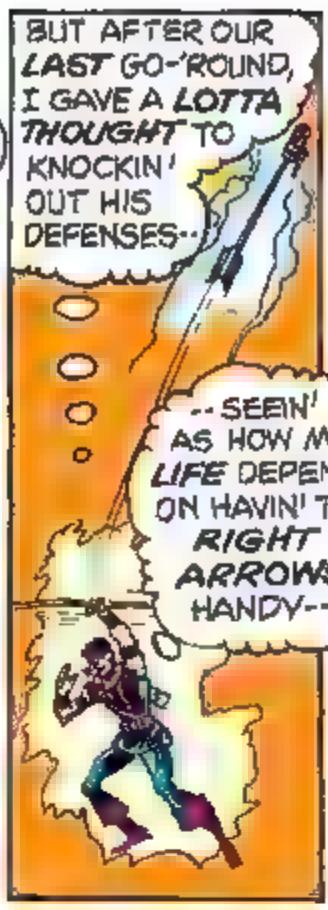
LESSEE--IF I GET THAT ONE RIGHT, DO I GET TO GO ON FOR THE REALLY BIG MONEY?

BOM!

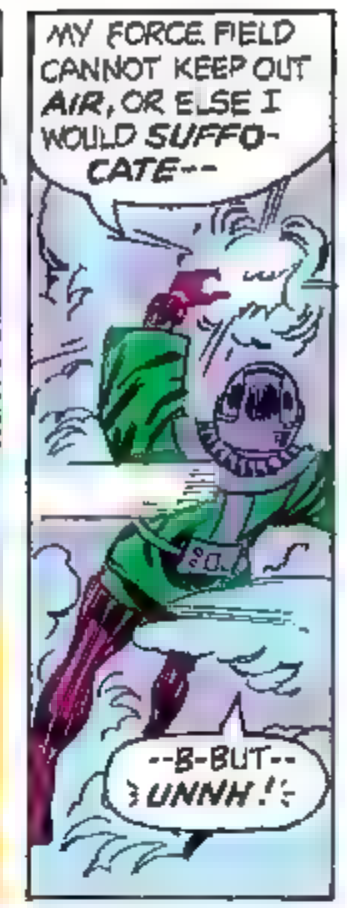
DUCK, YOU SUCKER!

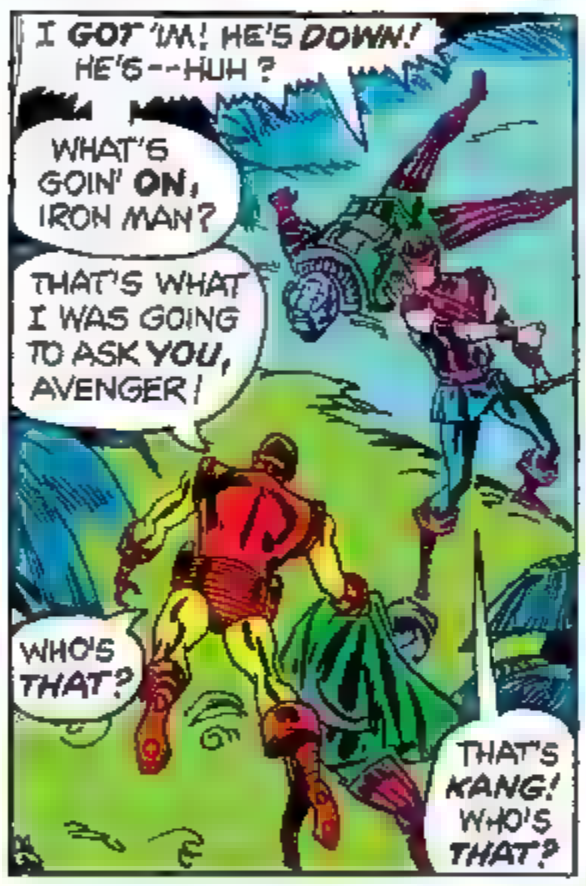
THIS GUY'S BOUND AND DETERMINED NOT TO SEE THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS, LIKE RAMA-TUT SAID HE WOULD! *

SINCE RAMA-TUT IS HIM IN THE FUTURE, YOU GOTTA ADMIRE KANG'S BULLHEADEDNESS--
--EVEN IF YOU CAN'T SAY MUCH FOR HIS BRAINS!
* GSA #2. --LEN

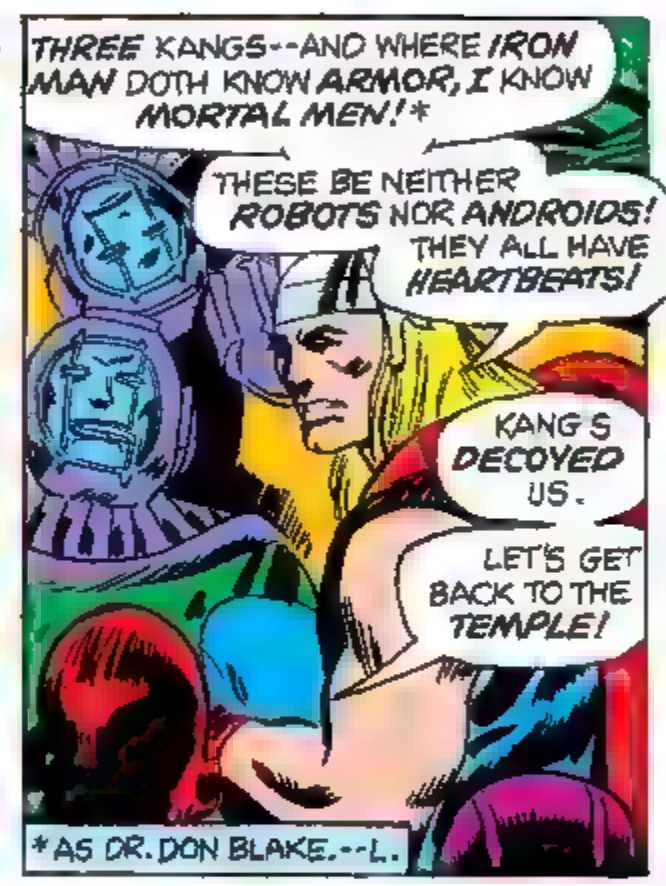

BUT AFTER OUR LAST GO-'ROUND, I GAVE A LOTTA THOUGHT TO KNOCKIN' OUT HIS DEFENSES--
--SEEIN' AS HOW MY LIFE DEPENDS ON HAVIN' THE RIGHT ARROWS HANDY--

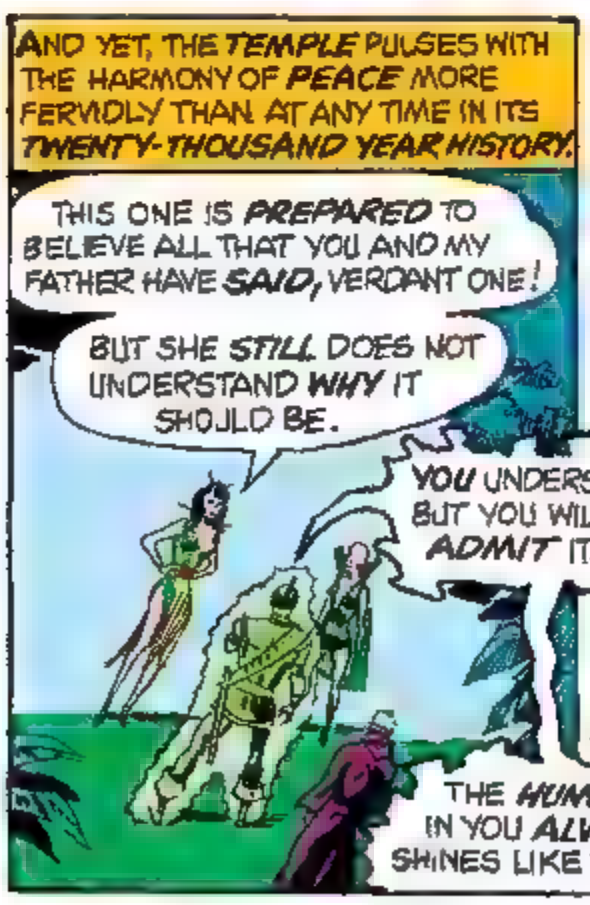
--AND THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT TO CHECK F I WAS RIGHT!
WH--? GAS ARROWS!


MY FORCE FIELD CANNOT KEEP OUT AIR, OR ELSE I WOULD SUFFO-CATE--
--B-BUT--
UNNH!


I GOT 'IM! HE'S DOWN! HE'S--HUH?
WHAT'S GOIN' ON, IRON MAN?
THAT'S WHAT I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU, AVENGER!
WHO'S THAT?
THAT'S KANG! WHO'S THAT?

THAT'S KANG, TOO--AT LEAST HE SAID HE WAS KANG WHEN I FOUND HIM, AND HE FOUGHT LIKE KANG!
THEN WHO BE THIS, AVENGERS?


THREE KANGS--AND WHERE IRON MAN DOTH KNOW ARMOR, I KNOW MORTAL MEN! *
THESE BE NEITHER ROBOTS NOR ANDROIDS! THEY ALL HAVE HEARTBEATS!
KANG'S DECOYED US.
LET'S GET BACK TO THE TEMPLE!
* AS DR. DON BLAKE.--L.


AND YET, THE TEMPLE PULSES WITH THE HARMONY OF PEACE MORE FERVIDLY THAN AT ANY TIME IN ITS TWENTY-THOUSAND YEAR HISTORY.
THIS ONE IS PREPARED TO BELIEVE ALL THAT YOU AND MY FATHER HAVE SAID, VERDANT ONE!
BUT SHE STILL DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHY IT SHOULD BE.

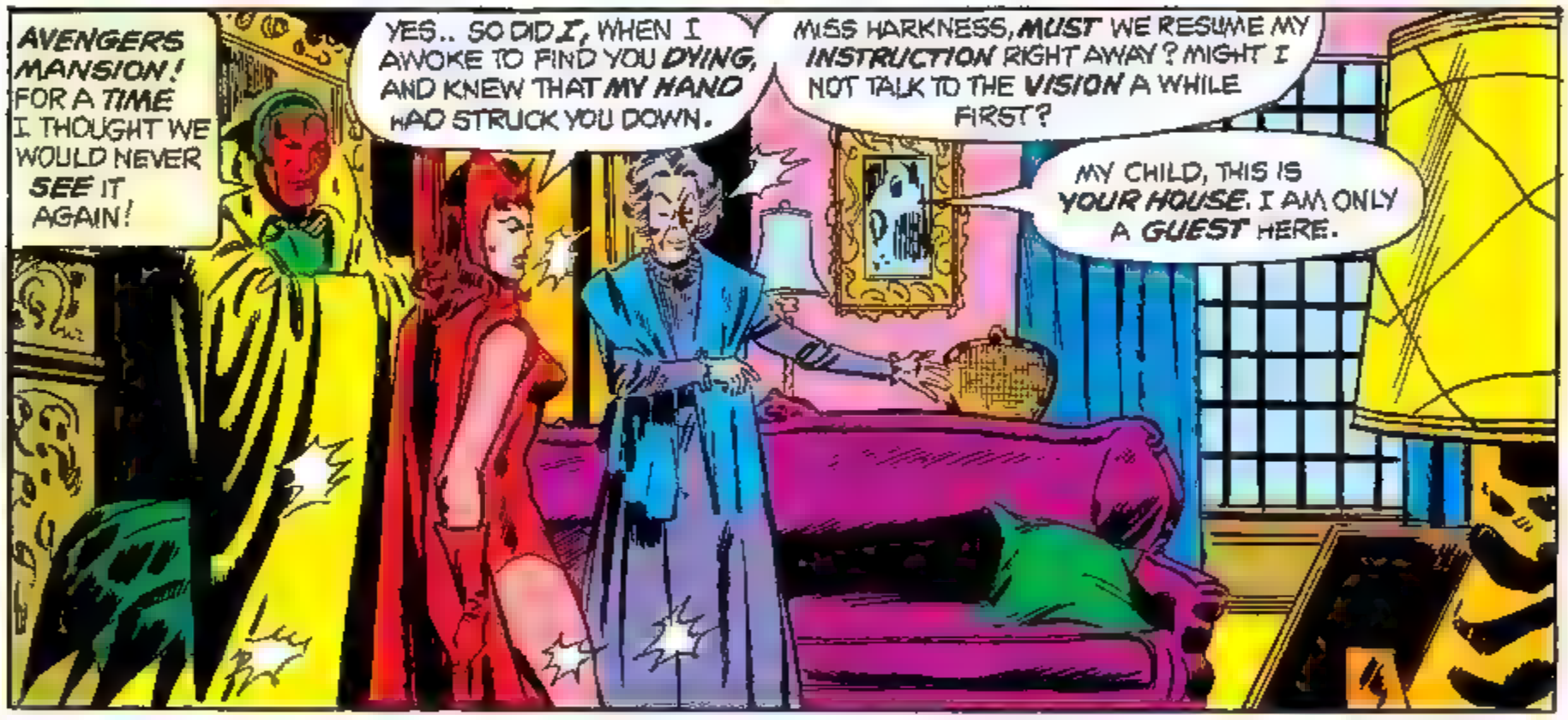
WOMAN, HAVE YOU NOT SEEN THAT YOU ARE TO MARRY THAT TREE?
YOU UNDERSTAND, BUT YOU WILL NOT ADMIT IT.
THE HUMANITY IN YOU ALWAYS SHINES LIKE THE SUN!

WHAT? WHAT DO YOU SAY?
YOU SAW THE PRIESTS OF PAMA BRING HIM HERE. HE IS THE ELDEST COTATI ON EARTH--AND IN THE PRIME OF HIS LIFE.
HE HAS PASSED HIS YEARS ON THIS SPOT COMPLETING HIS MENTAL POWERS, TILL HE IS THE PERFECT PLANT.
NOW HE SEEKS THE PERFECT UNION.

THIS--THIS IS INSANE! YOU ARE PLAYING SOME MONSTROUS GAME WITH M-- WITH THIS ONE!
SHE CANNOT MARRY A TREE-- AND EVEN IF SHE COULD, SHE COULD NEVER BECOME A MADONNA BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT HAVE A CHILD!
OF COURSE...

...ONE CAN ONLY MATE WITH ONE'S OWN SPECIES.
THAT IS WHY THIS ONE CHOSE TO RE-ANIMATE THIS BODY AFTER YOU BURIED IT IN THIS ONE'S SHADE
YOU LOVED THE SWORDSMAN! IT WAS MY WEDDING GIFT TO YOU.

YOU SEE--AH, BUT NOW WE NEED NO CLUMSY WORDS! TOUCH YOUR FOREHEAD TO MY BARK AND YOU WILL FINALLY KNOW ALL!
SLOWLY, SOLEMN YET SUSPICIOUS, SHE DOES SO--AND HER EYES UNFOCUS!


AVENGERS MANSION! FOR A TIME I THOUGHT WE WOULD NEVER SEE IT AGAIN!
YES.. SO DID I, WHEN I AWOKE TO FIND YOU DYING, AND KNEW THAT MY HAND HAD STRUCK YOU DOWN.
MISS HARKNESS, MUST WE RESUME MY INSTRUCTION RIGHT AWAY? MIGHT I NOT TALK TO THE VISION A WHILE FIRST?
MY CHILD, THIS IS YOUR HOUSE. I AM ONLY A GUEST HERE.

BESIDES, YOU ARE THE WOMAN WHO JUST SAVED THE WORLD, AS WELL AS THREE OF ITS OCCUPANTS --QUITE SKILLFULLY, TOO, I MIGHT ADD.
YOU'D MAKE ME FEEL SILLY ASKING MY PERMISSION TO DO ANYTHING!
THEN, MISS HARKNESS, I BELIEVE...WE WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK PRIVATELY.

OH, I CAN TELL YOU DON'T WANT AN OLD WOMAN AROUND--THOUGH I'D LOVE TO HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY TO EACH OTHER!
AND IN CASE YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ME BEFORE-- YOUR INSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE, WANDA! YOU'RE A FREE WOMAN!
FROM NOW ON, YOU LEARN FOR YOURSELF!

THEN AGATHA HARKNESS SCAMPERS UPSTAIRS, ***MOST*** UNLIKE ANY ***PROPER*** OLD WOMAN...LEAVING SOFT SILENCE BEHIND.

WANDA...SHE SPOKE OF ***YOUR*** INSTRUCTION, BUT IT'S ***I*** WHO'S BEEN ***LEARNING*** OVER THE PAST MONTHS. ***FIRST*** WE WERE APART BECAUSE WE ***QUARRELED...***

...THEN BECAUSE YOU WERE IMMERSED IN ***BETTERING*** YOURSELF...

...AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, I LIVED A LIFE WITHOUT YOUR ***WARMTH.***

I FOUND THAT SUCH A LIFE WAS FAR MORE BARREN THAN LIFE WITH US ***TOGETHER.***

I DIDN'T TRULY ***REALIZE*** HOW I FELT--OR ***THAT*** I FELT AS DEEPLY AS I ***DO***--UNTIL ***MANTIS*** OFFERED HERSELF TO ME--

--AND I FELT NO DESIRE TO ***ACCEPT*** HER.

WANDA, YOU ARE THE ***ONLY WOMAN*** FOR ME! I CAN MAKE YOU ***HAPPY!*** FORGET ALL THE ***HUMAN RULES*** AND ***PLEASE...***

...MARRY ME.

TO ***BLAZES*** WITH ***RULES!***

WHAT ***I'M*** WORRIED ABOUT IS ***WHY*** YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME, DARLING? IS IT JUST BECAUSE I WAS THE ***FIRST GIRL*** YOU MET?

NO, WANDA. IT IS ***PARTIALLY*** BECAUSE MY LIFE IS THAT OF AN ***AVENGER***--

--AND I COULD ONLY LOVE A WOMAN WHO CAN ***UNDERSTAND*** THAT LIFE.

BUT MUCH MORE THAN THAT, I LOVE YOU AS A ***WOMAN,*** BECAUSE I AM FINALLY ***FULLY AWARE*** OF MYSELF AS A ***MAN.***

I AM ***NO LONGER*** A MYSTERIOUS ***SYNTHEZOID*** OF UNKNOWN ***ORIGIN.*** NOW I KNOW ***ALL*** OF MY LIFE, AND THAT I WAS CREATED TO BE ***HUMAN,*** BY A ***HUMAN FATHER.***

NOW I ***CAN*** BE YOUR MAN FOR ALL MY ***SYNTHETIC FLESH.***

I KNOW YOU CAN.

DON'T YOU SEE, LOVE IS FOR ***SOULS,*** NOT ***BODIES?***

YES, VISION--

--***YES,*** I'LL ***MARRY*** YOU!

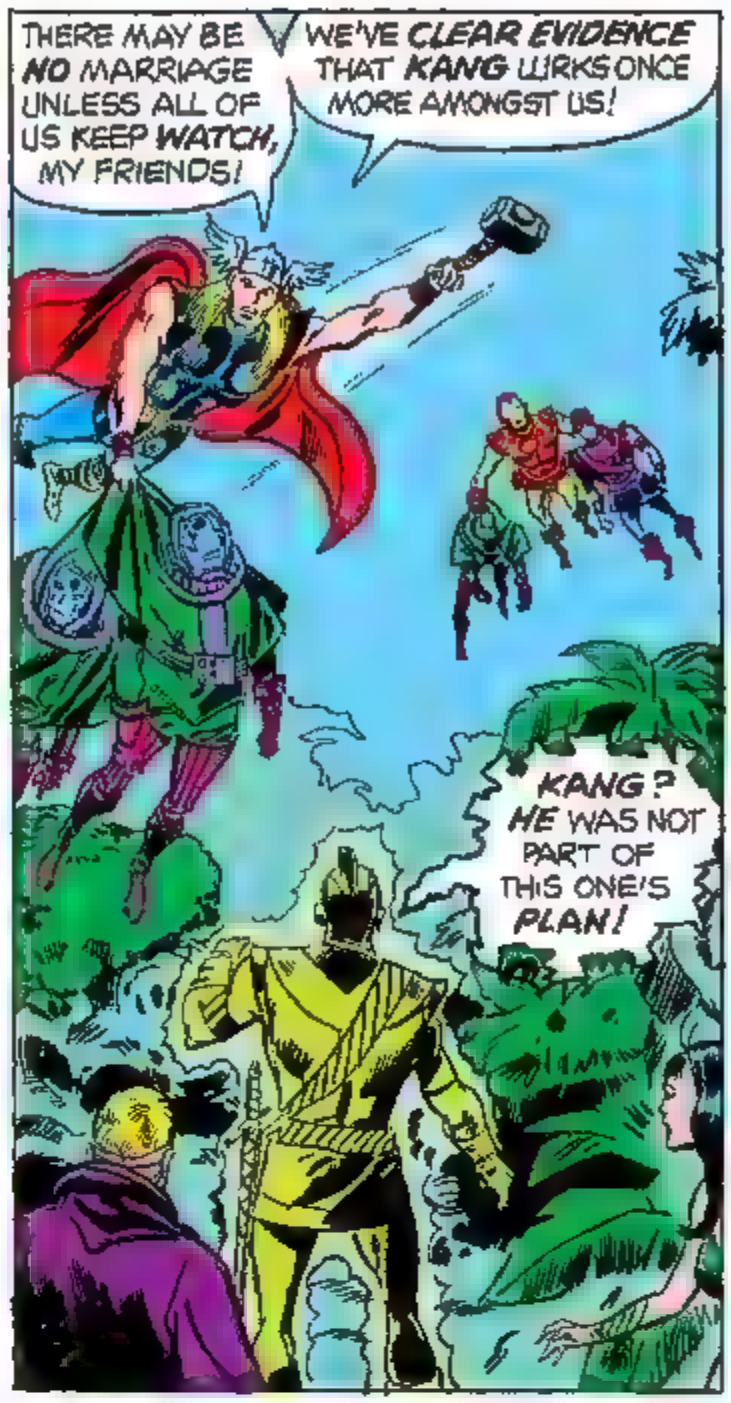
YOU--YOU MEAN ***YOU***--THAT IS ***WE***--YOU AND ME---

NOW DON'T GO ***HUMAN*** ON ME ALL AT ***ONCE,*** DARLING! ***STAMMERING'S*** NOT YOUR ***STYLE!***

I MEAN ***YES!*** ***YES!!*** ***YES!***

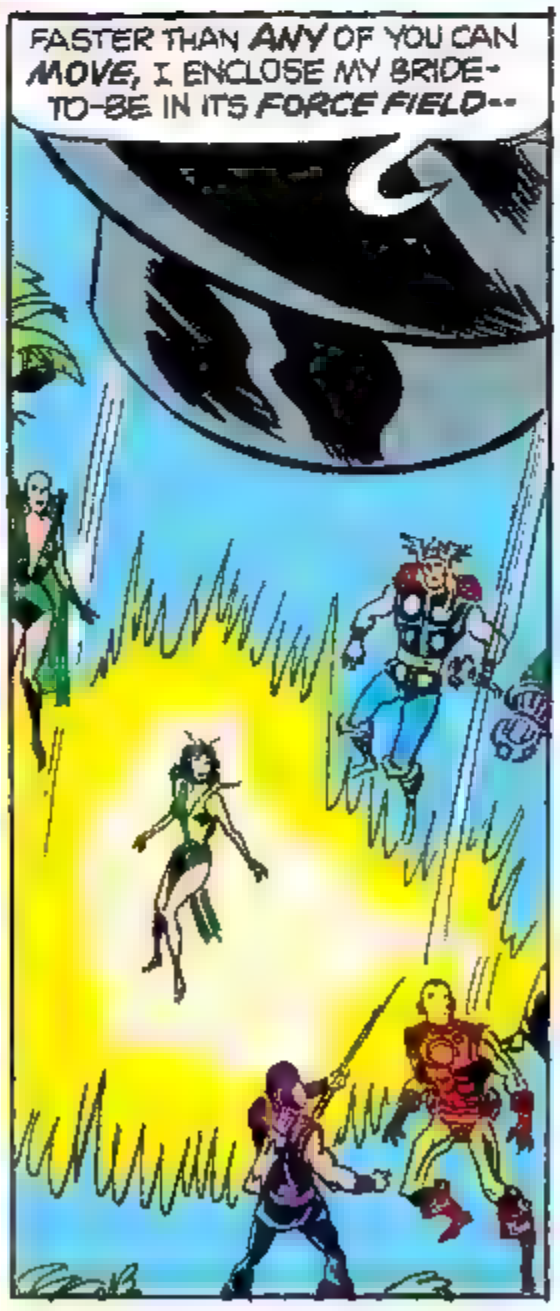
YES, THIS ONE KNOWS EVERYTHING NOW! THE RESTRAINTS HAVE FALLEN FROM HER MEMORIES--
--AND SHE SEES THAT ALL YOU HAVE SAID IS THE TRUTH!
AND MOREOVER, SHE HAS ALSO EFFORTLESSLY ACHIEVED TOTAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE COTATI'S INNER SPIRIT!

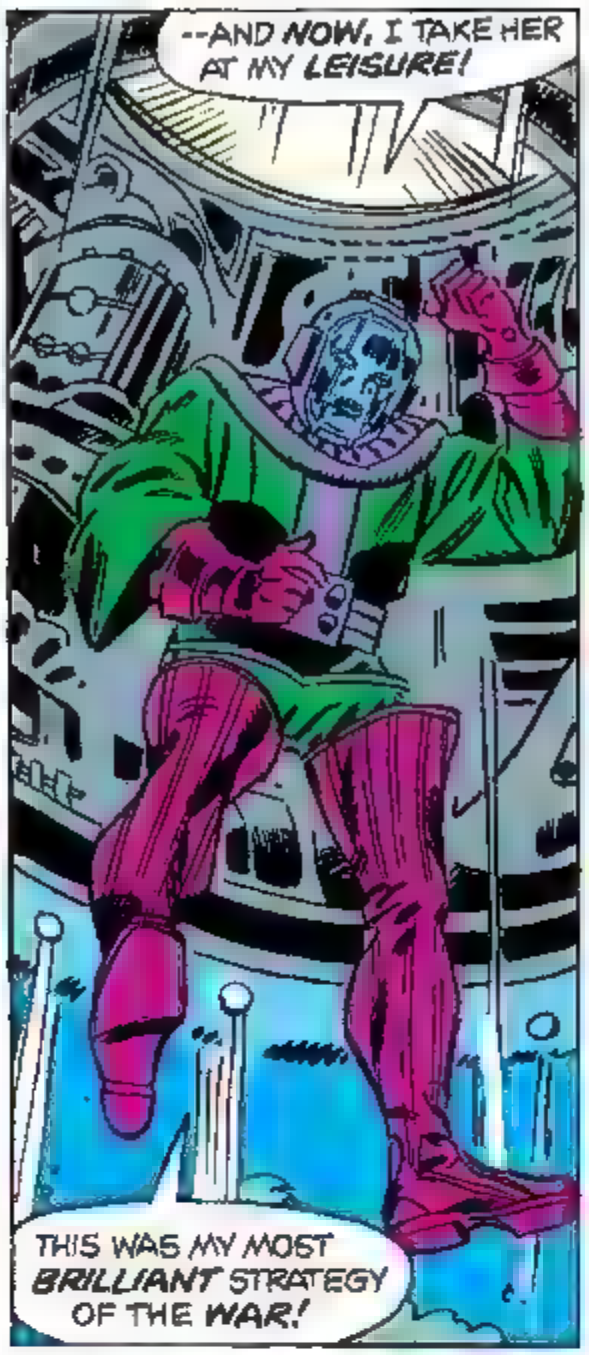
IT IS PERFECT--AND IT COMPLETES THIS ONE'S HUMAN SOUL PERFECTLY!
YES, SHE WILL MARRY HIM! YES!


THERE MAY BE NO MARRIAGE UNLESS ALL OF US KEEP WATCH, MY FRIENDS!
WE'VE CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT KANG LURKS ONCE MORE AMONGST US!
KANG? HE WAS NOT PART OF THIS ONE'S PLAN!

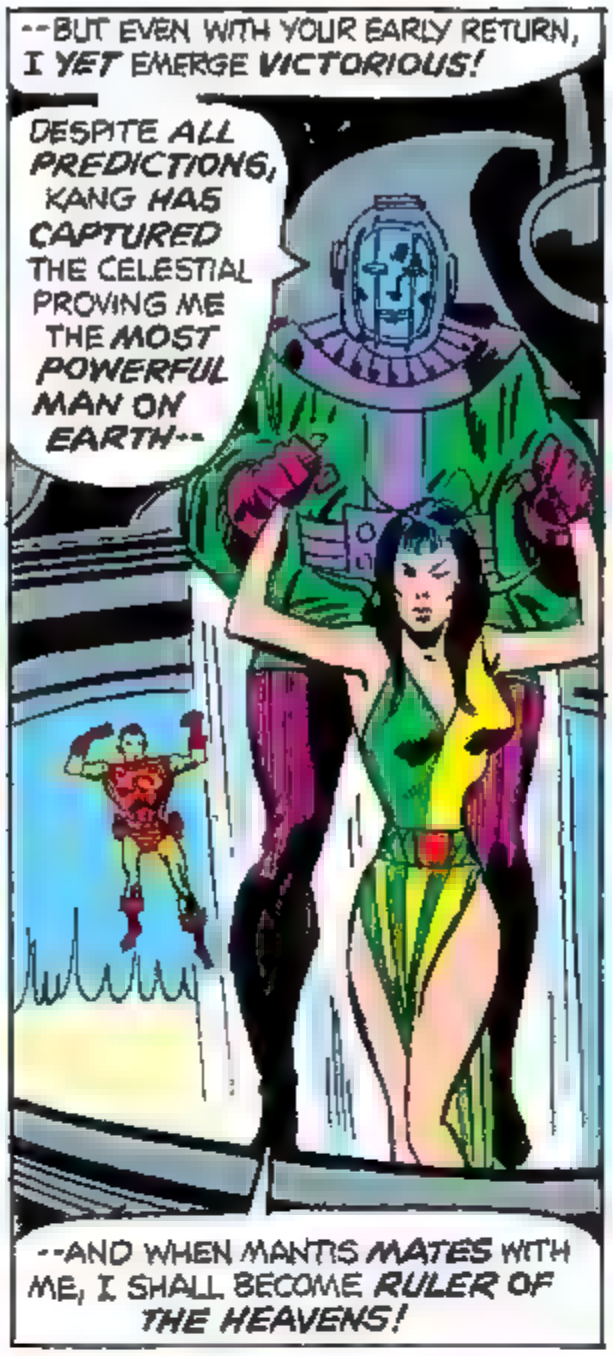
I KNOW NAUGHT OF ANYONE'S PLANS!
FOR THAT VERY REASON WE MUST STAND READY FOR ANYTHING!

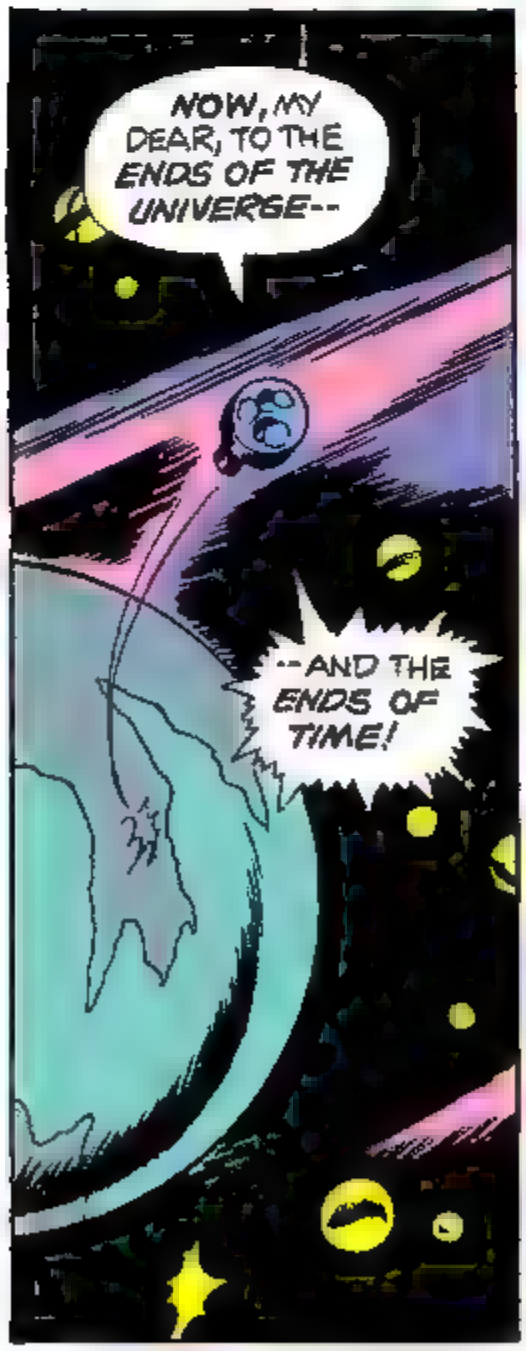
EVEN THIS, THUNDER GOD?
KANG'S TIME SPHERE-- WARPING IN ABOVE US--!


FASTER THAN ANY OF YOU CAN MOVE, I ENCLOSE MY BRIDE-TO-BE IN ITS FORCE FIELD--

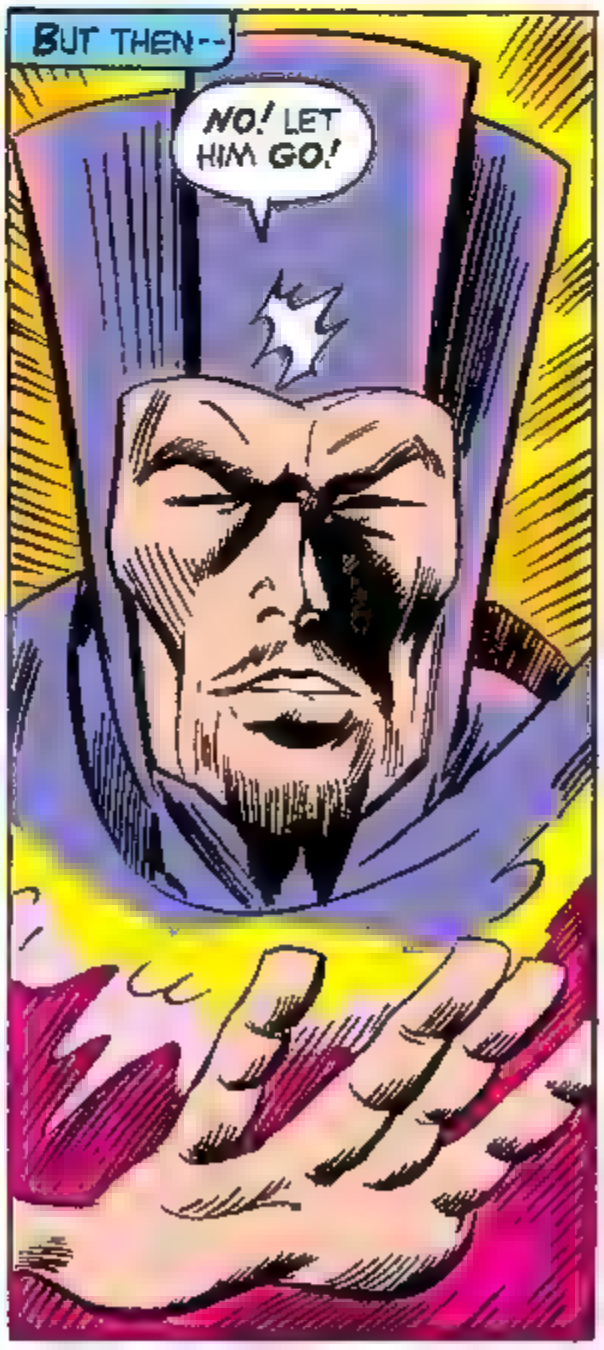

--AND NOW, I TAKE HER AT MY LEISURE!
THIS WAS MY MOST BRILLIANT STRATEGY OF THE WAR!

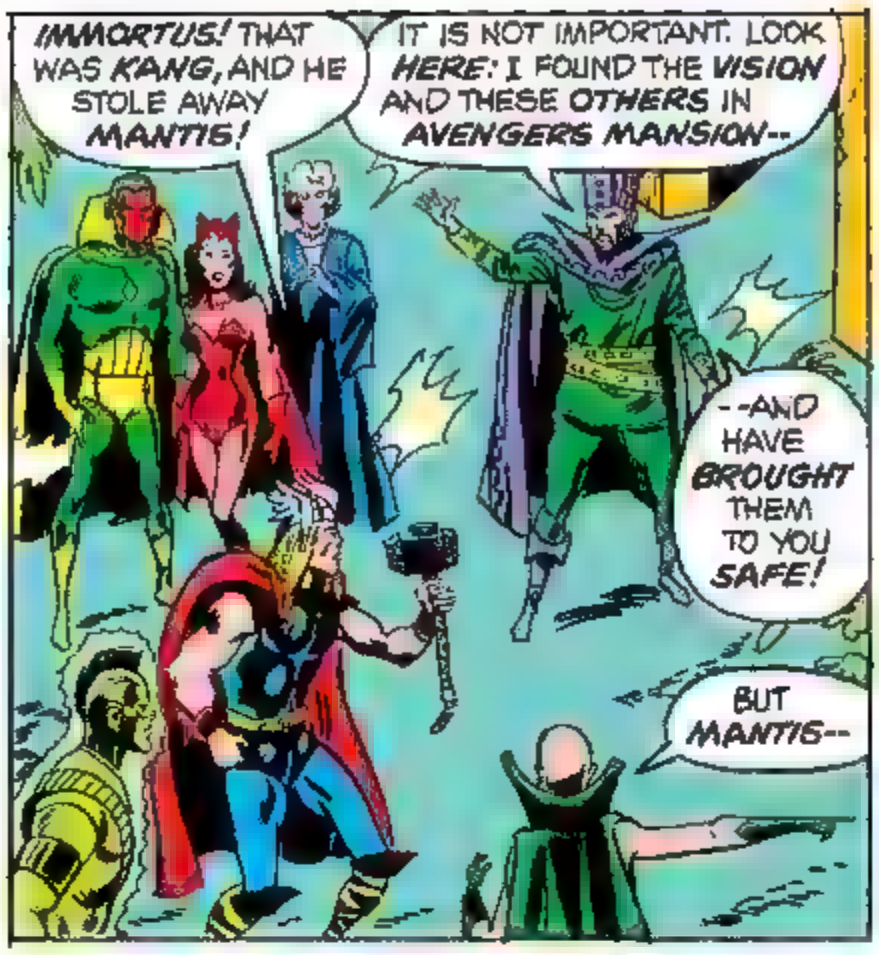
AS A TIME TRAVELER, I CAN JOURNEY TO THE SAME MOMENT MANY TIMES, FROM DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE FUTURE! THUS I APPEARED THREE OTHER TIMES THIS DAY!
I EXPECTED YOU TO TAKE LONGER IN BATTLING MY OTHER SELVES--


--BUT EVEN WITH YOUR EARLY RETURN, I YET EMERGE VICTORIOUS!
DESPITE ALL PREDICTIONS, KANG HAS CAPTURED THE CELESTIAL PROVING ME THE MOST POWERFUL MAN ON EARTH--
--AND WHEN MANTIS MATES WITH ME, I SHALL BECOME RULER OF THE HEAVENS!


NOW, MY DEAR, TO THE ENDS OF THE UNIVERSE--
--AND THE ENDS OF TIME!

ODIN'S BLOOD! THE FATES WEAVE TOO CRUEL A WEB!
COME! WE MUST FOLLOW HIM, SOMEHOW!

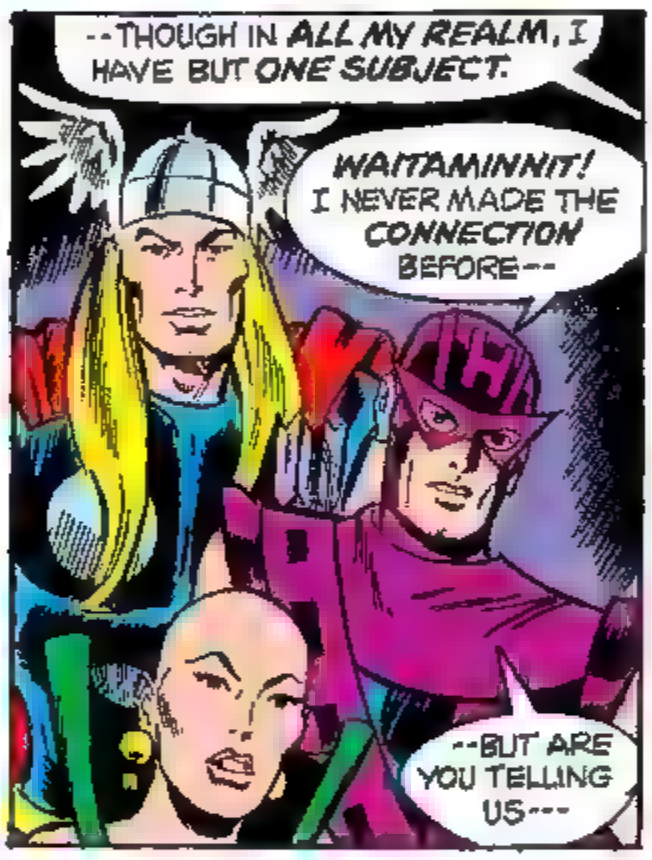

BUT THEN--
NO! LET HIM GO!


IMMORTUS! THAT WAS KANG, AND HE STOLE AWAY MANTIS!
IT IS NOT IMPORTANT. LOOK HERE: I FOUND THE VISION AND THESE OTHERS IN AVENGERS MANSION--
--AND HAVE BROUGHT THEM TO YOU SAFE!
BUT MANTIS--

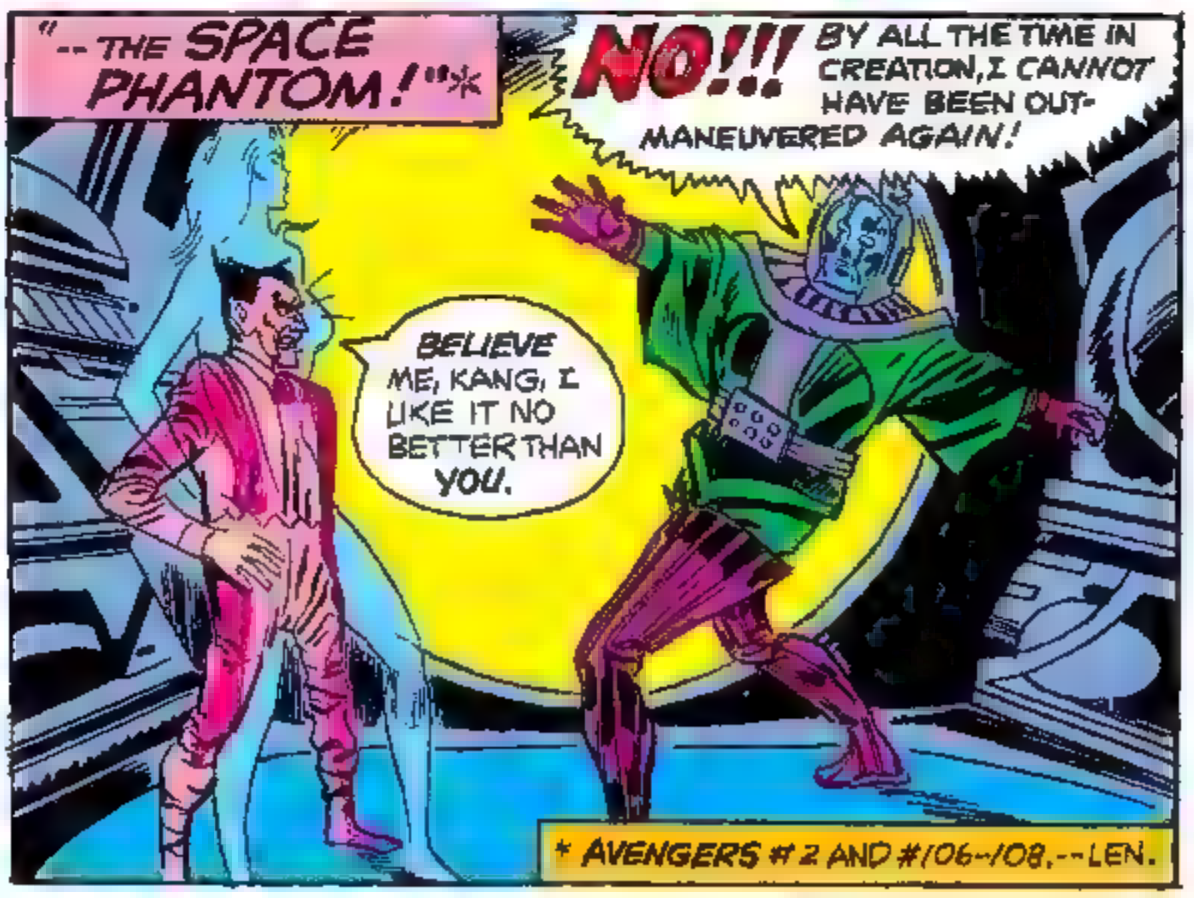
OH, COME INTO THE TEMPLE, THEN, IF YOU ARE DISPOSED TO BE DISCOURTEOUS.
YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT I BROUGHT A LARGE BOX WITH ME WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE TEMPLE EARLIER--*
*#135.--L.

--AND WITHIN IT WAITS OUR MANTIS!
WHA-AT ??

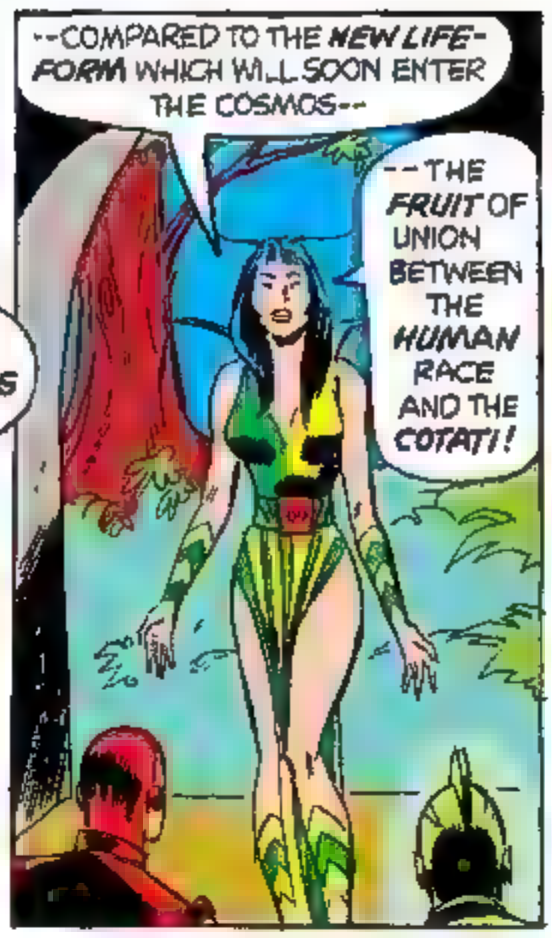
COME NOW AVENGERS--YOU WILL ALSO REMEMBER THAT IN ADDITION TO BEING THE THE MASTER OF TIME--
--I AM THE RULER OF LIMBO--

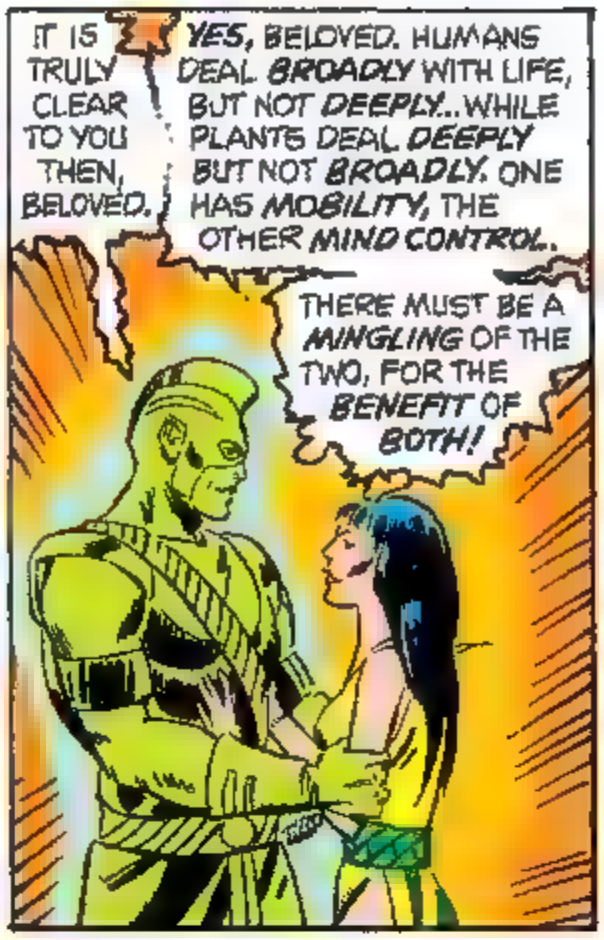

--THOUGH IN ALL MY REALM, I HAVE BUT ONE SUBJECT.
WAITAMINNIT! I NEVER MADE THE CONNECTION BEFORE--
--BUT ARE YOU TELLING US---

"YES, HAWKEYE. MANTIS APPEARED IN THIS BOX JUST MOMENTS AGO, WHEN KANG'S SPHERE FIRST DREW EVERYONE'S ATTENTION TO THE SKY!
" IT WAS THEN THAT HE WHO MUST OBEY ME AT THE EXPENSE OF HIS OWN DESIRES CHANGED PLACES WITH HER--HE WHO MUST NOW HAVE REVEALED HIMSELF TO KANG AS--


"--THE SPACE PHANTOM!"*
NO!!! BY ALL THE TIME IN CREATION, I CANNOT HAVE BEEN OUT-MANEUVERED AGAIN!
BELIEVE ME, KANG, I LIKE IT NO BETTER THAN YOU.
* AVENGERS #2 AND #106-108.--LEN.

THE SPACE PHANTOM WAS FORCED TO LIE WITHIN THE SIMULATED LIMBO OF IMMORTUS'S BOX UNTIL THIS ONE FACED DANGER--
--AS IMMORTUS, BEING KANG OF THE FUTURE, KNEW SHE WOULD.
YET THIS IS A MEANINGLESS EVENT--


--COMPARED TO THE NEW LIFE-FORM WHICH WILL SOON ENTER THE COSMOS--
--THE FRUIT OF UNION BETWEEN THE HUMAN RACE AND THE COTATI!


IT IS TRULY CLEAR TO YOU THEN, BELOVED.
YES, BELOVED. HUMANS DEAL BROADLY WITH LIFE, BUT NOT DEEPLY.. WHILE PLANTS DEAL DEEPLY BUT NOT BROADLY. ONE HAS MOBILITY, THE OTHER MIND CONTROL..
THERE MUST BE A MINGLING OF THE TWO, FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH!

IF THERE'S ANY MINGLING GOING ON, THE VISION AND I WANT IN ON IT!
YES, FOR WE HAVE ALSO DECIDED TO MARRY.
WELL, I'LL BE--!
THAT'S WONDERFUL-- REALLY WONDERFUL!

SO IT IS, IRON MAN. AS A SOVEREIGN OF SORTS, I HAD PLANNED TO SOLEMNIZE ONE WEDDING TODAY--
--AND TWO IS TWICE THE HONOR!

YET HOLD FOR ONE MORE MOMENT, IMMORTUS! ERE THE CEREMONIES DO COMMENCE--
I MOVE THAT THE AVENGERS BESTOW THE HIGHEST HONOR IN OUR POWER TO GRANT--
--AND MAKE MANTIS OFFICIALLY ONE OF US!

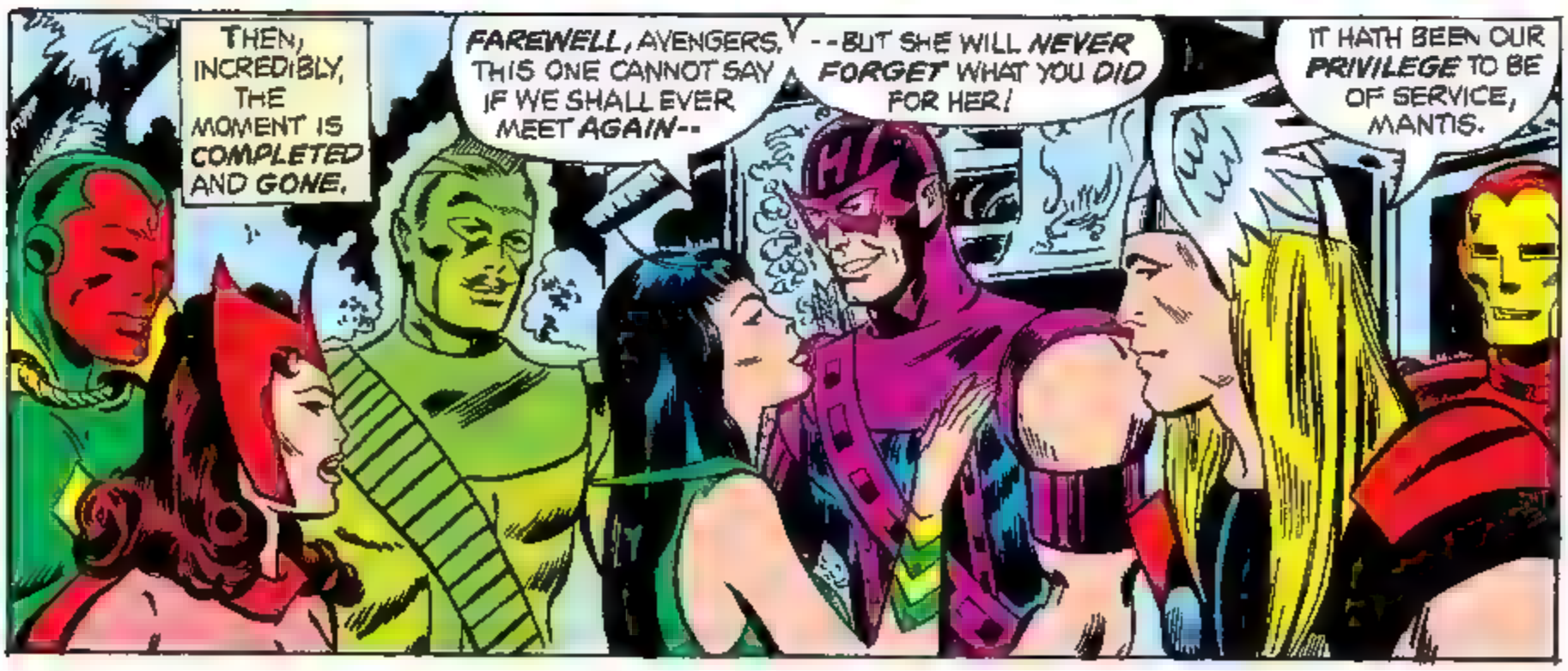
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
YOU CANNOT KNOW WHAT YOUR WORDS MEAN TO THIS ONE, EVEN AT A TIME LIKE THIS--!
THANK YOU, ONE AND ALL!

I'M HAPPY THAT SHE'S HAPPY, VISION. I DIDN'T LIKE HER FOR A LONG TIME--
--BUT SHE HAS HER DESTINY AND WE HAVE OURS!

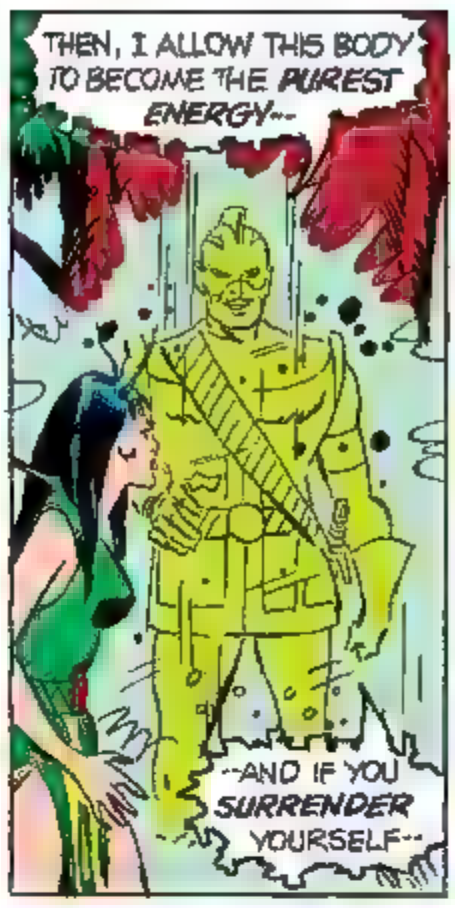
THEN, WITH LIGHTENED STEP, THEY ADJOURN ONCE MORE TO THE TEMPLE GARDEN--
--THESE SPECIAL MEN AND WOMEN WHO SO SELDOM CELEBRATE JOY--

--AND THERE, TWO MEN WHO ARE MORE THAN MEN STAND PROUDLY BESIDE TWO WOMEN WHO ARE MORE THAN WOMEN--

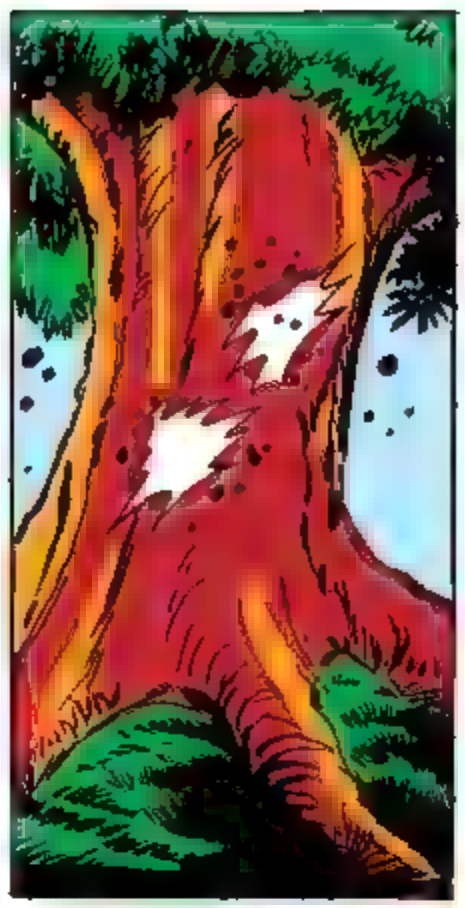
--AND BONDS BEYOND WORDS UNITE EACH WITH HIS OWN.

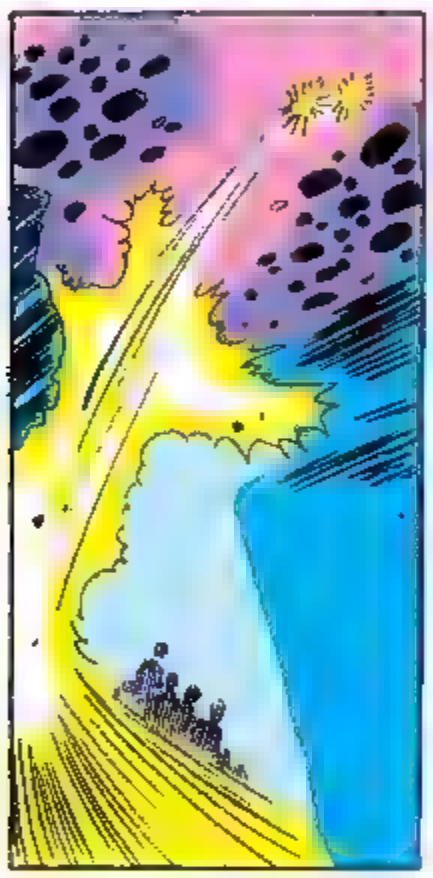

THEN, INCREDIBLY, THE MOMENT IS COMPLETED AND GONE.
FAREWELL, AVENGERS. THIS ONE CANNOT SAY IF WE SHALL EVER MEET AGAIN--
--BUT SHE WILL NEVER FORGET WHAT YOU DID FOR HER!
IT HATH BEEN OUR PRIVILEGE TO BE OF SERVICE, MANTIS.

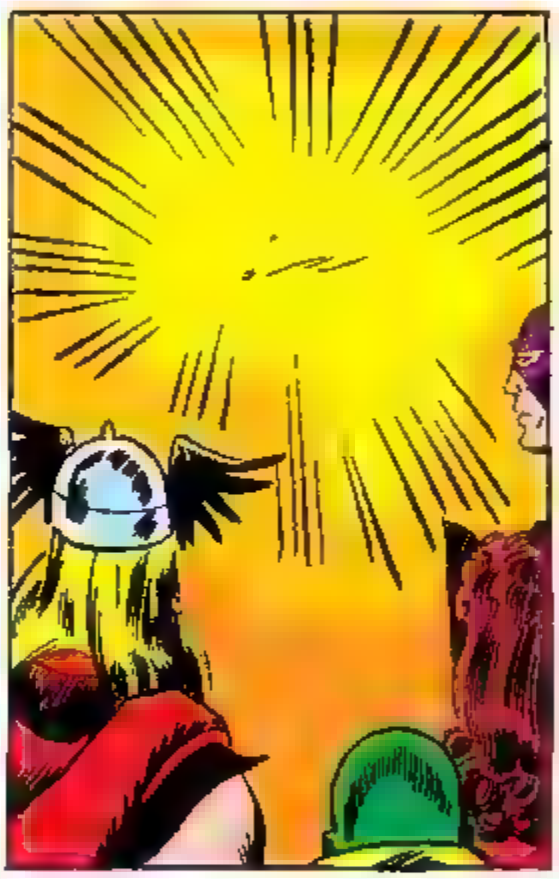
THIS IS THE END OF LIFE AS YOU HAVE KNOWN IT, BELOVED. HAVE YOU ANY REGRETS-- DOUBTS?
NONE, BELOVED. THIS ONE HAS LIVED AS SHE WOULD--AND NOW, WE TWO SHALL LIVE AS WE WILL!


THEN, I ALLOW THIS BODY TO BECOME THE PUREST ENERGY--
--AND IF YOU SURRENDER YOURSELF--

YOU CAN ALSO ACHIEVE THIS STATE!







WELL..!
C'MON, PEOPLE! I, FOR ONE, AM READY FOR SOME SERIOUS SHUT-EYE AFTER ALL THIS HOOPLA.
NOT US, HAWKEYE. WANDA AND I HAVE A HONEYMOON TO ATTEND TO.
LET'S GO HOME!

OH YEAH.
I FORGOT
AND SO MANTIS LEAVES THE AVENGERS' LIVES, STILL IN MANY WAYS A MYSTERY...

...AND YET, SHE LEAVES BEHIND ONE CERTAIN LEGACY...
...FOR NOW, WHENEVER THESE BEINGS LOOK UPON THEIR GREAT, GREEN PLANET, THEY'LL SEE NOT ONLY EARTH AND SKY...

...BUT THE HEAVENS BEYOND, AS WELL!
THEY'LL THINK OF THEMSELVES IN PERSPECTIVE, AND REALIZE HOW SMALL THEY REALLY ARE...

...AND MARVEL AT THE MANY MYSTERIES STILL UNPLUMBED!
THE END!

REPRINTING *AMAZING ADVENTURES* #12

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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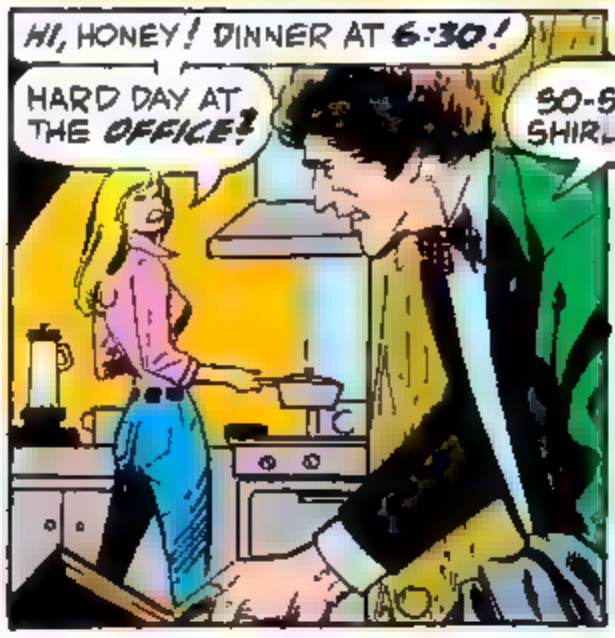
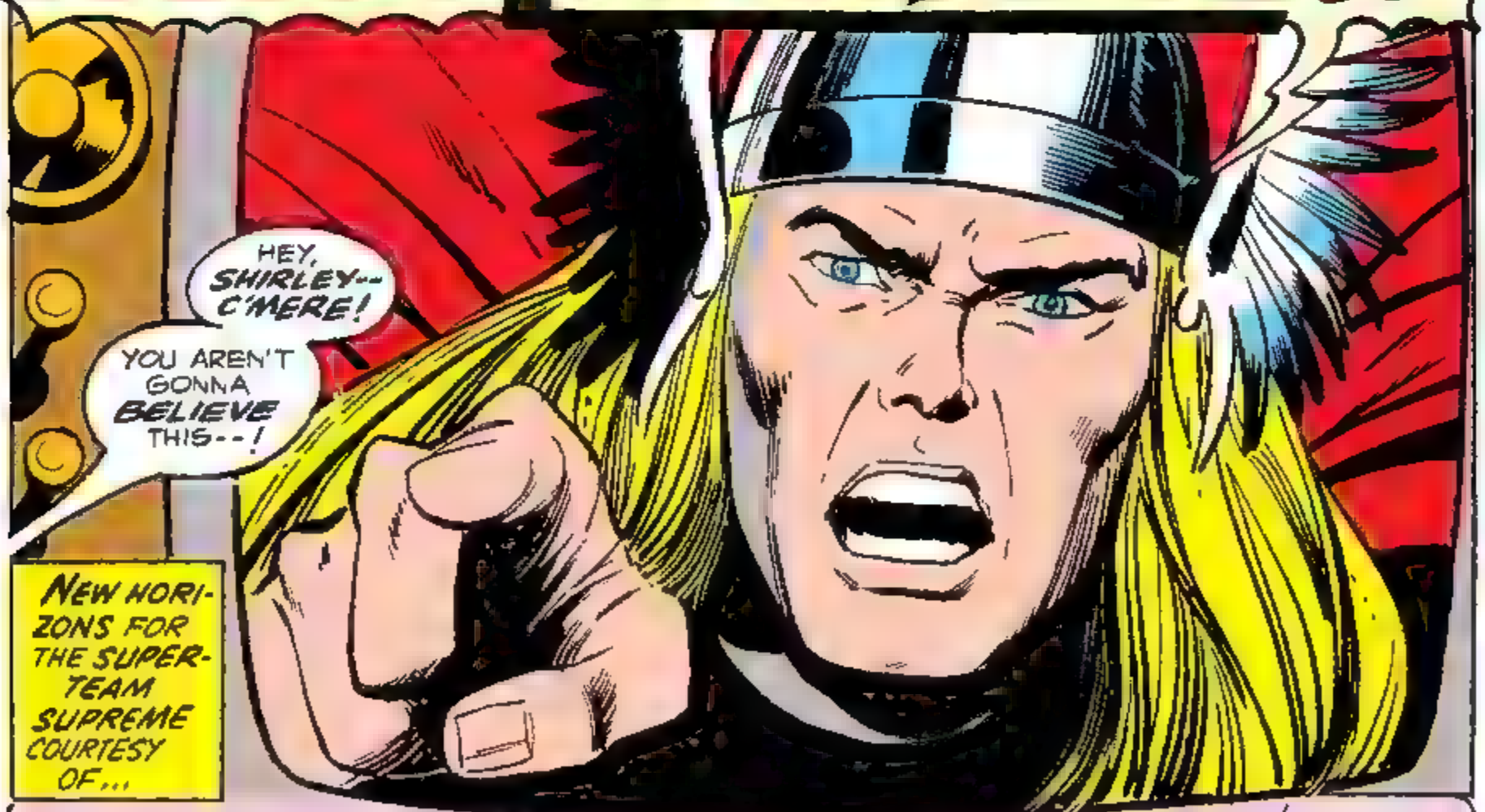
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
GANGWAY, AN AVENGER IS COMING THRU!
ONCE MORE, THE ORDER CHANGETH! ENTER MOONDRAGON... YELLOWJACKET... AND THE BLUGEONING BEAST!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

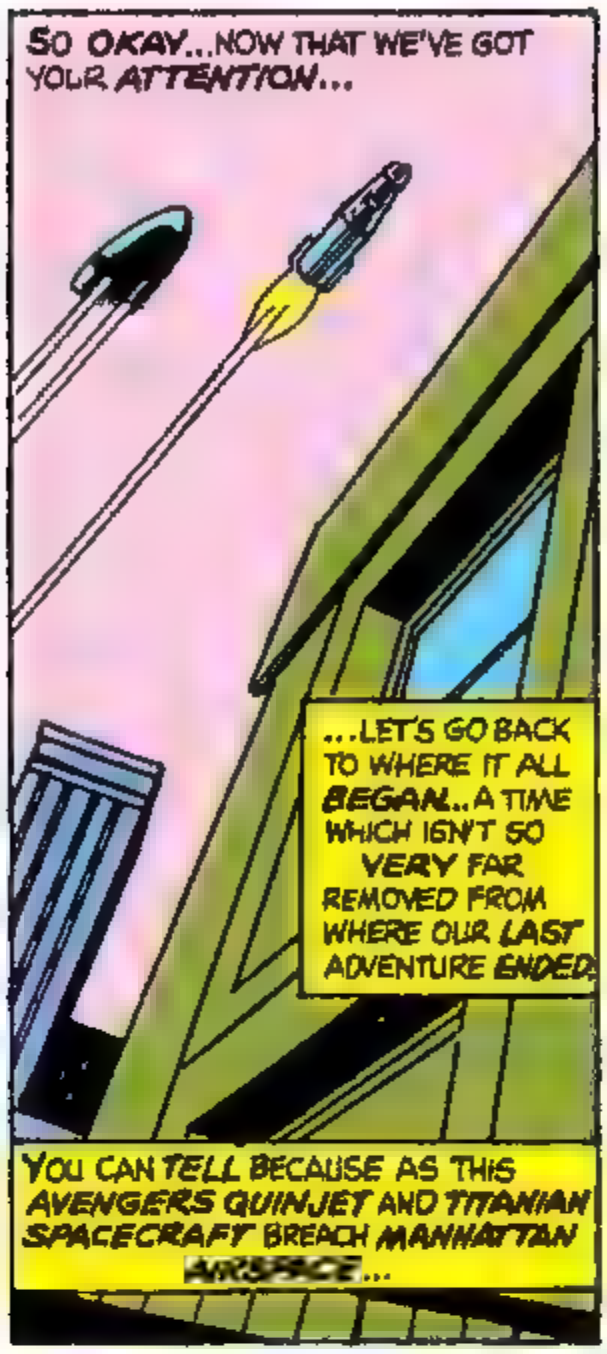


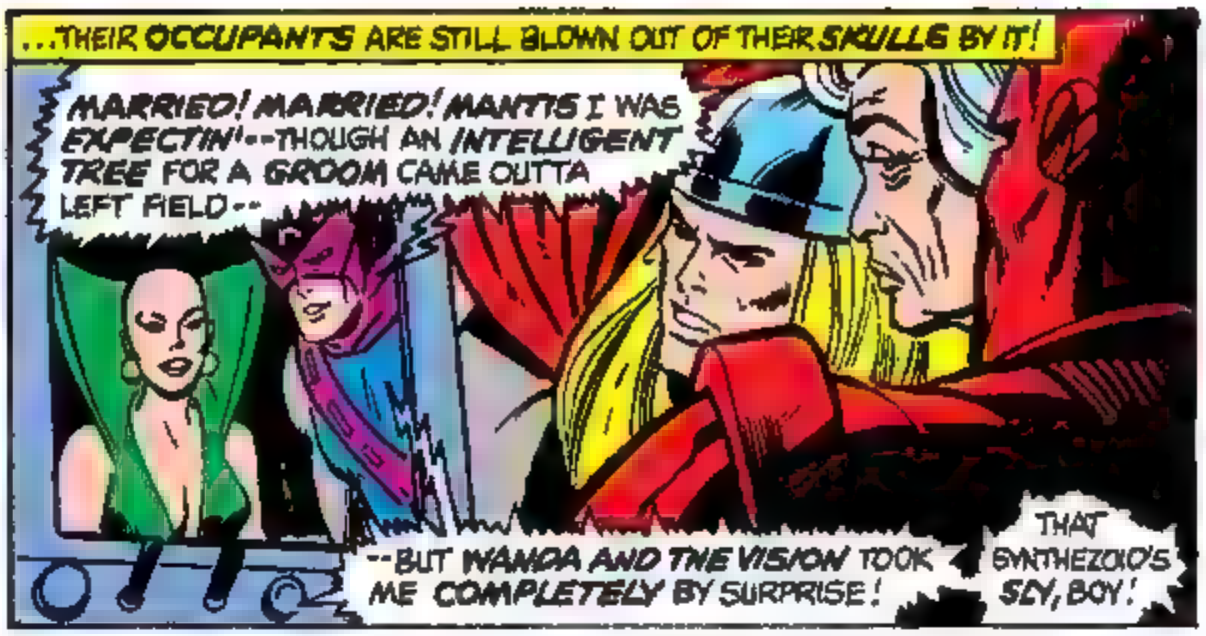
WE DO SEEK OUT NEW AVENGERS!!

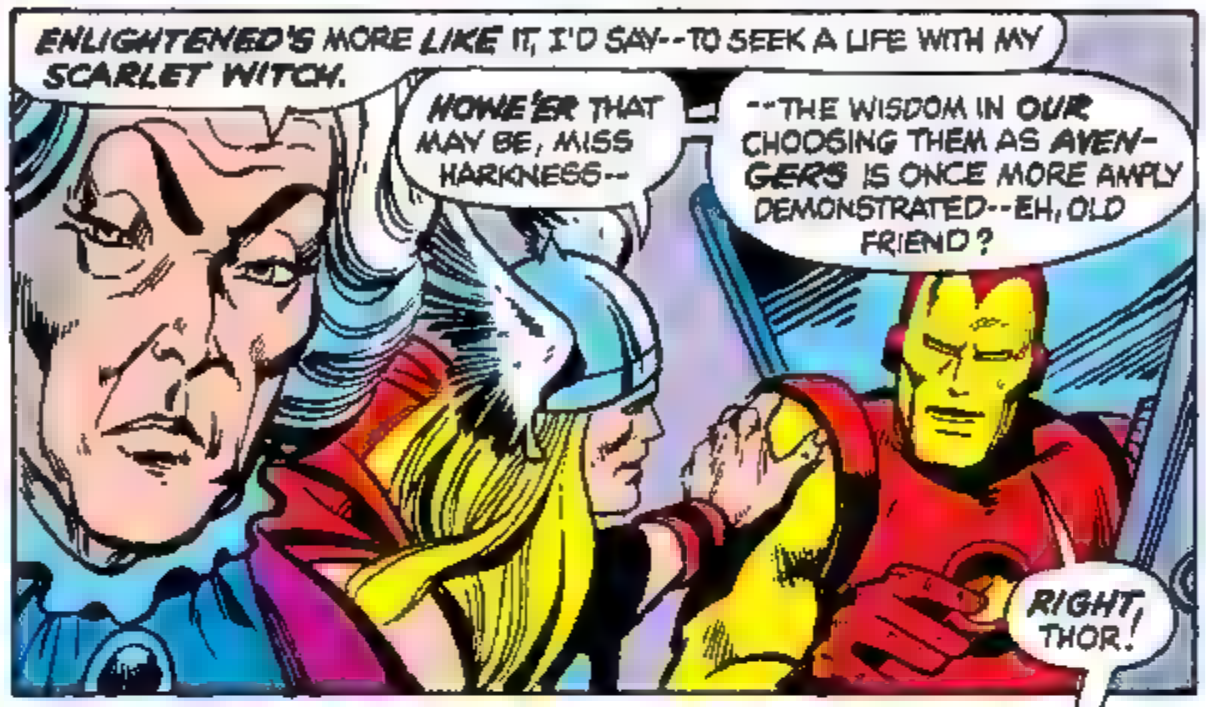


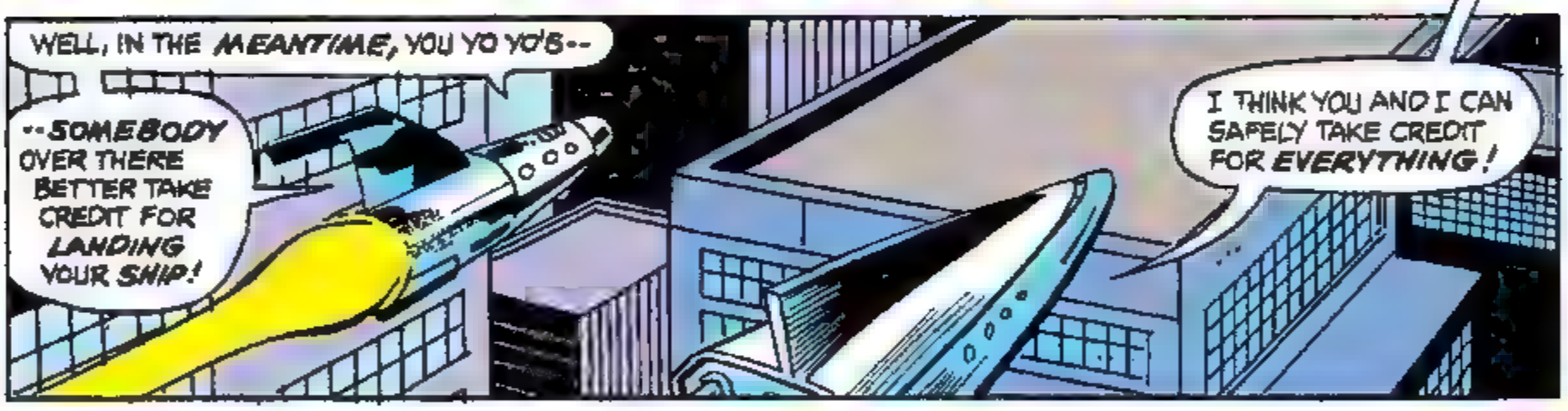
NEW HORIZONS FOR THE SUPER-TEAM SUPREME COURTESY OF...

STEVE ENGLEHART SAGA | GEORGE TUSKA ART | VINCE COLLETTA EMBELLISHMENT | L. WETTER, P. RACHELSON, LETTERING COLORING | LEN WEIN EDITOR

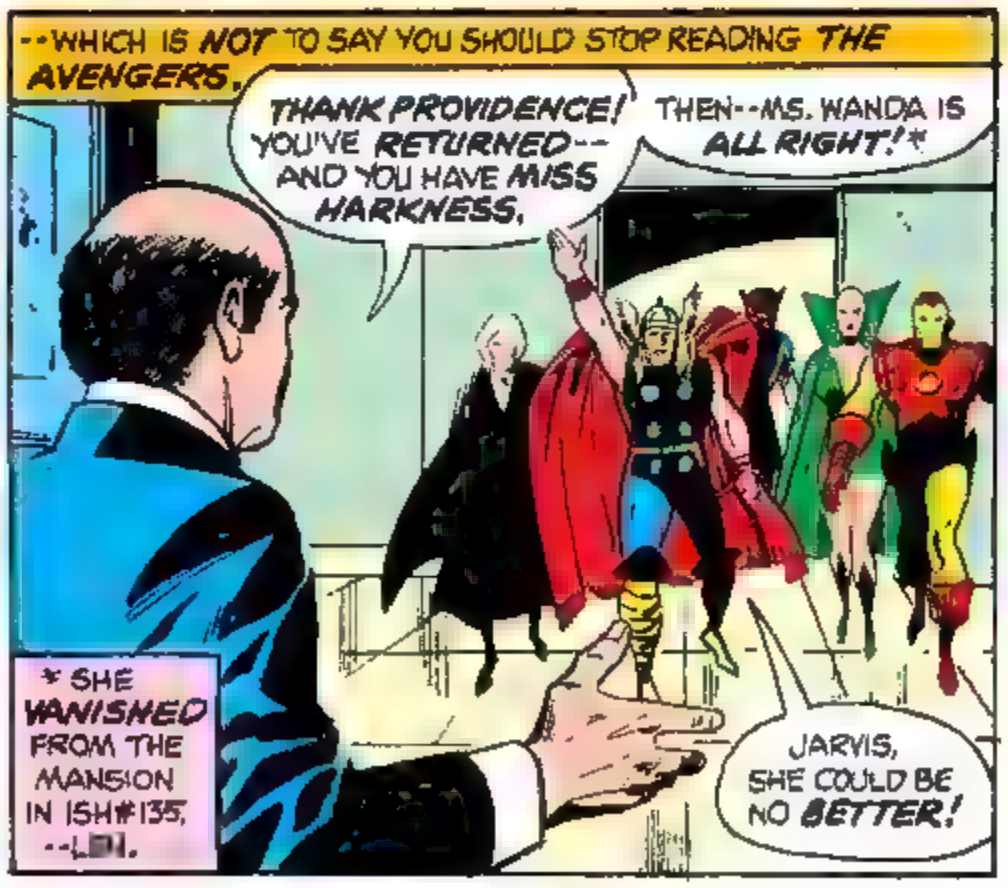

SO OKAY...NOW THAT WE'VE GOT YOUR ATTENTION...
...LET'S GO BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...A TIME WHICH ISN'T SO VERY FAR REMOVED FROM WHERE OUR LAST ADVENTURE ENDED.
YOU CAN TELL BECAUSE AS THIS AVENGERS QUINJET AND TITANIAN SPACECRAFT BREACH MANHATTAN AIRSPACE...


...THEIR OCCUPANTS ARE STILL BLOWN OUT OF THEIR SKULLS BY IT!
MARRIED! MARRIED! MANTIS I WAS EXPECTIN'--THOUGH AN INTELLIGENT TREE FOR A GROOM CAME OUTTA LEFT FIELD--
--BUT WANDA AND THE VISION TOOK ME COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE!
THAT SYNTHEZOID'S SLY, BOY!


ENLIGHTENED'S MORE LIKE IT, I'D SAY--TO SEEK A LIFE WITH MY SCARLET WITCH.
HOWE'ER THAT MAY BE, MISS HARKNESS--
--THE WISDOM IN OUR CHOOSING THEM AS AVENGERS IS ONCE MORE AMPLY DEMONSTRATED--EH, OLD FRIEND?
RIGHT, THOR!

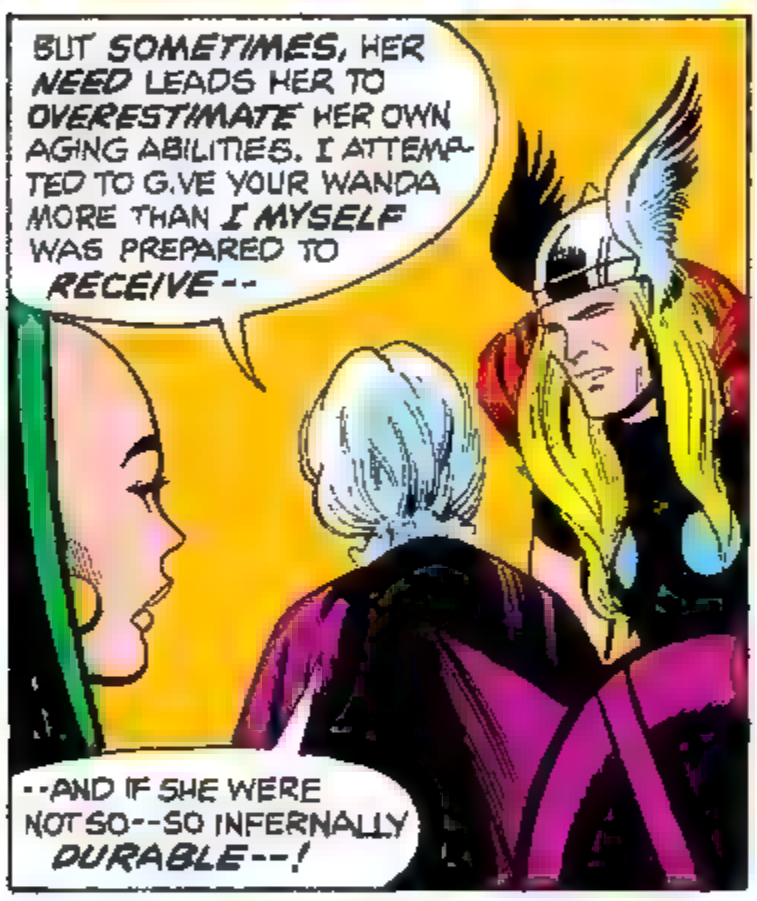

WELL, IN THE MEANTIME, YOU YO YO'S--
--SOMEBODY OVER THERE BETTER TAKE CREDIT FOR LANDING YOUR SHIP!
I THINK YOU AND I CAN SAFELY TAKE CREDIT FOR EVERYTHING!

AYE, HAWKEYE--BUT HARKEN!
E'EN WITH THE CELESTIAL MADONNA DEPARTED FROM OUR ROLLING SPHERE, YON STAR ABOVE AVENGERS MANSION DOTH YET SHINE!
I GUESS WE'LL NEVER LEARN HOW IT GOT THERE
AH, BUT YOU'LL LEARN, GENTLE READER...IF YOU READ "THE TRIAL OF THE WATCHER" IN THE LATEST CAPTAIN MARVEL--


--WHICH IS NOT TO SAY YOU SHOULD STOP READING THE AVENGERS.
THANK PROVIDENCE! YOU'VE RETURNED--AND YOU HAVE MISS HARKNESS.
THEN--MS. WANDA IS ALL RIGHT!*
* SHE VANISHED FROM THE MANSION IN ISH#135. --LEE.
JARVIS, SHE COULD BE NO BETTER!

BUT--WHY IS MISS HARKNESS--I MEAN--
--ERR--THAT IS--
SIR, THESE MEN DO NOT "HAVE" AGATHA HARKNESS!
I WALK, AS EVER, ALONE!

ONLY THROUGH THE LOVE OF OTHERS--A MOTHER'S FOR HER SON, PERHAPS--OR A WOMAN'S FOR HERSELF AND HER MAN--
--ONLY THROUGH OTHERS MAY AGATHA HARKNESS KNOW PEACE.


BUT SOMETIMES, HER NEED LEADS HER TO OVERESTIMATE HER OWN AGING ABILITIES. I ATTEMPTED TO GIVE YOUR WANDA MORE THAN I MYSELF WAS PREPARED TO RECEIVE--
--AND IF SHE WERE NOT SO--SO INFERNALLY DURABLE--!

AND YET SHE IS, SO I SAY TO YOU, GENTLEMEN--
--YOUR WANDA WILL NEVER BE A GREAT WITCH, MUCH LESS A SORCERESS--
--BUT SHE WILL BE VERY GOOD!
EXCUSE ME.
AND ME, SIRS.

YES VIRGINIA, THERE IS A MORNING AFTER...
...WHEN EVERYTHING'S JUST ENDED AND NOTHING'S YET BEGUN, AND EVEN SO PERFECT A BUTLER AS JARVIS STUFFS HIS FOOT IN HIS MOUTH.
..BUT THAT TIME CAN OFTEN BE A PERIOD OF PURE RELAXATION FOR THE MIND, AS WELL...SO HAWKEYE'S ACTUALLY QUITE ANNOYED WHEN THOR TURNS TO HIM AND RUMBLES...
NOW, AVENGERS, THERE BE URGENT BUSINESS BEFORE US!

E'EN RECORDING THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH BUT GONE ON **HOLIDAY**, THE LOSS OF **MANTIS** AND THE **SWORDSMAN** DOTH LEAVE OUR RANKS SORE **DEPLETED**.

I DO RECOMMEND WE SEEK OUT **REPLACEMENTS**.

AHH, **YOU** JUST WANNA BE THE LEADER OF A **BIG OL' BAND!**

SPEAK FOR **YOURSELF**, JOHNNY B. GOODE! I'M ON **THOR'S** SIDE!

RIGHT NOW, **TWO** OF US THREE ARE ONLY **PART-TIMERS**. THE AVENGERS DESERVE A **BETTER SHOWING** THAN **THAT!**

YOU GUYS **ALWAYS** STICK TOGETHER, DON'T YOU?

MAYBE..

...BUT HERE'S SOMETHING I'M CERTAIN **YOU'LL** JOIN ME ON!

TO WIT: I HEREBY PROPOSE **MOONDRAGON** AS THE NEWEST AVENGER ASSEMBLED!

ME? YOU **ASTONISH** ME IRON MAN!

OH NO, PERHAPS YOU DO **NOT**...FOR **MANTIS** WAS VERY **DEAR** TO ALL YOUR HEARTS--

--AND YOU SEE **MUCH** OF HER IN ME.

BUT I **WARN** YOU, GENTLEMEN: I SAY "**I**," NOT "**THIS ONE**." AND I HAVE BEEN **ADJUDGED** TO HAVE A **DIFFERENT DESTINY** FROM HERS.*

FOR YOU SEE, I **ACCEPT** YOUR OFFER. I HAVE HAD MY **INTEREST** REAWAKENED IN THIS, MY **NATIVE PLANET**--

YOUR **CONFUSION** OF US WOULD **DISMAY** ME.

--AND SINCE I WISH TO **REMAIN** HERE FOR A TIME, I AM **PLEASED** TO CALL US **ALLIES!**

AS AM **I**, AVENGER!

NUTS!

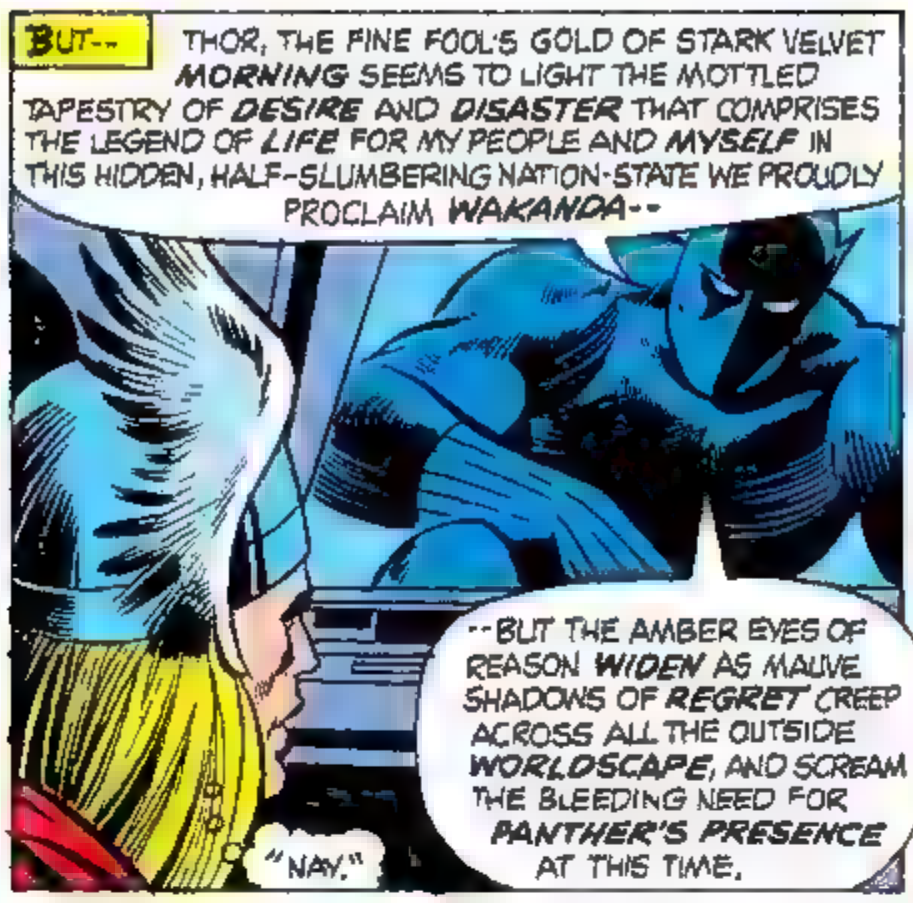
* BY THE **COTATI**, IN **GSA #4**.--L.

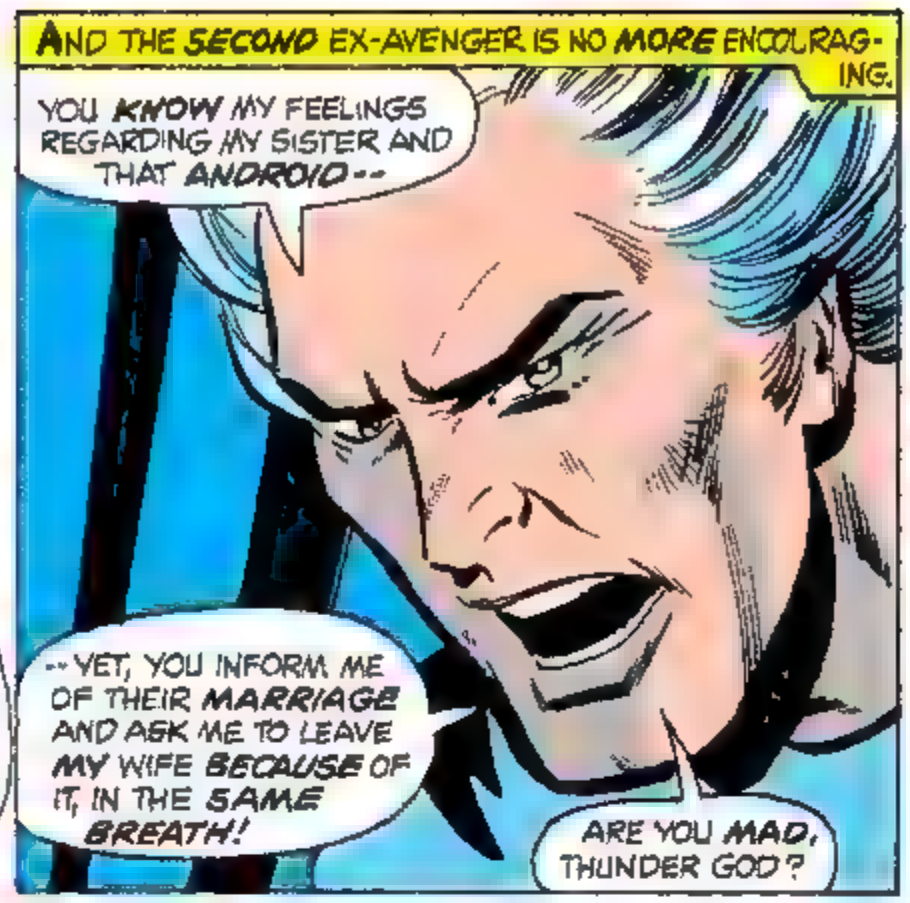
HOWEVER, ERE WE INITIATE **ANOTHER** INTO OUR CHOSEN MIDST, **I** DO HEREBY PROPOSE THAT WE INVITE THOSE WHO HAVE **COME AND GONE** TO RETURN.

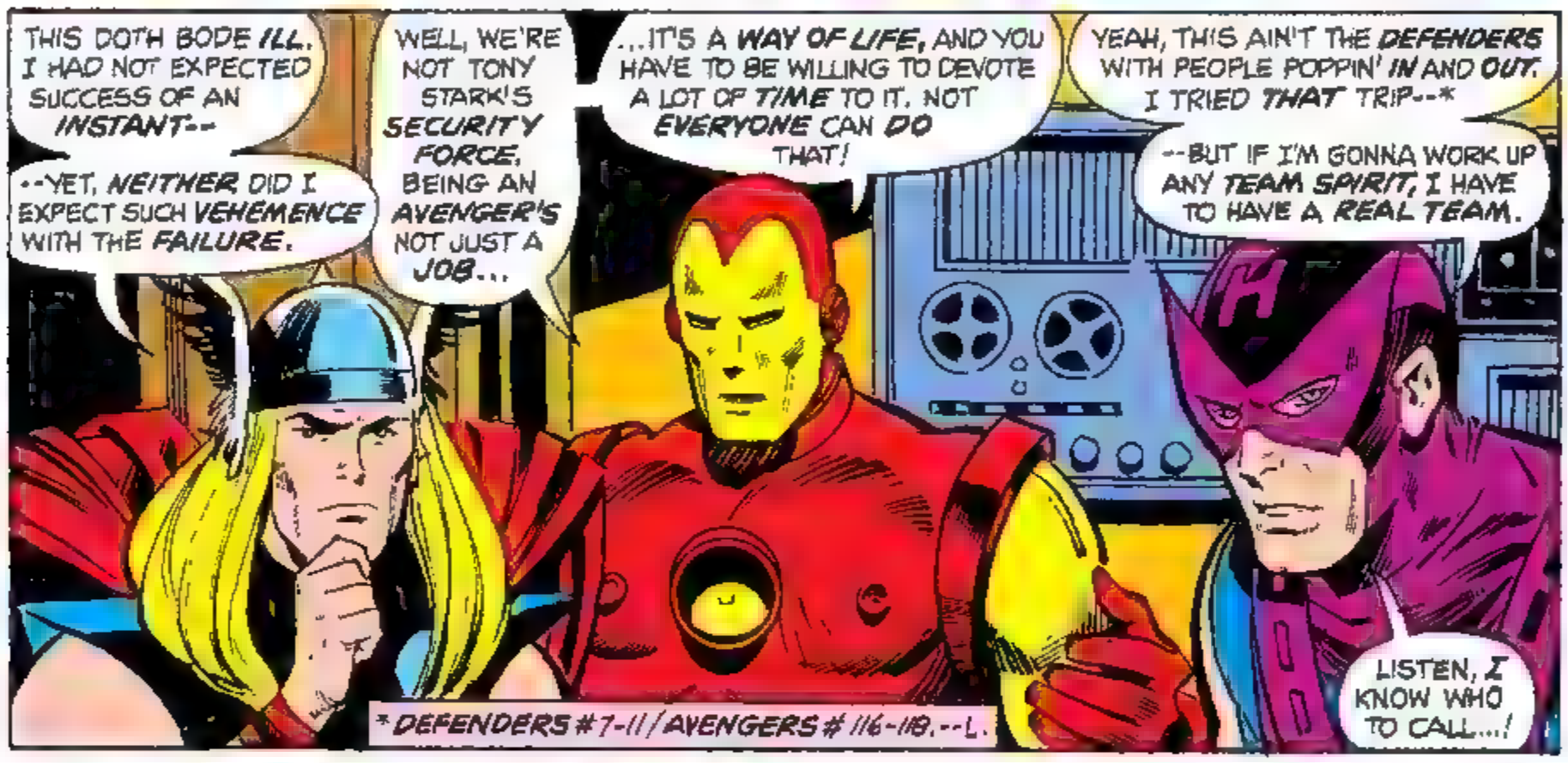
THEN, **C'MON**, SONUVODIN. LET'S GET IT **OVER** WITH BEFORE YOU BUST A **GUT!**

LET'S CALL THE **BLACK PANTHER** FIRST, SHALL WE? HE WAS THE **LAST** ONE TO **LEAVE**.

I STILL SAY WE'RE **DANDY** WHERE WE **ARE!**


BUT--
THOR, THE FINE FOOL'S GOLD OF STARK VELVET MORNING SEEMS TO LIGHT THE MOTTLED TAPESTRY OF DESIRE AND DISASTER THAT COMPRISES THE LEGEND OF LIFE FOR MY PEOPLE AND MYSELF IN THIS HIDDEN, HALF-SLUMBERING NATION-STATE WE PROUDLY PROCLAIM WAKANDA--
--BUT THE AMBER EYES OF REASON WIDEN AS MAUVE SHADOWS OF REGRET CREEP ACROSS ALL THE OUTSIDE WORLDSCAPE, AND SCREAM THE BLEEDING NEED FOR PANTHER'S PRESENCE AT THIS TIME.
"NAY."


AND THE SECOND EX-AVENGER IS NO MORE ENCOURAGING.
YOU KNOW MY FEELINGS REGARDING MY SISTER AND THAT ANDROID--
--YET, YOU INFORM ME OF THEIR MARRIAGE AND ASK ME TO LEAVE MY WIFE BECAUSE OF IT, IN THE SAME BREATH!
ARE YOU MAD, THUNDER GOD?

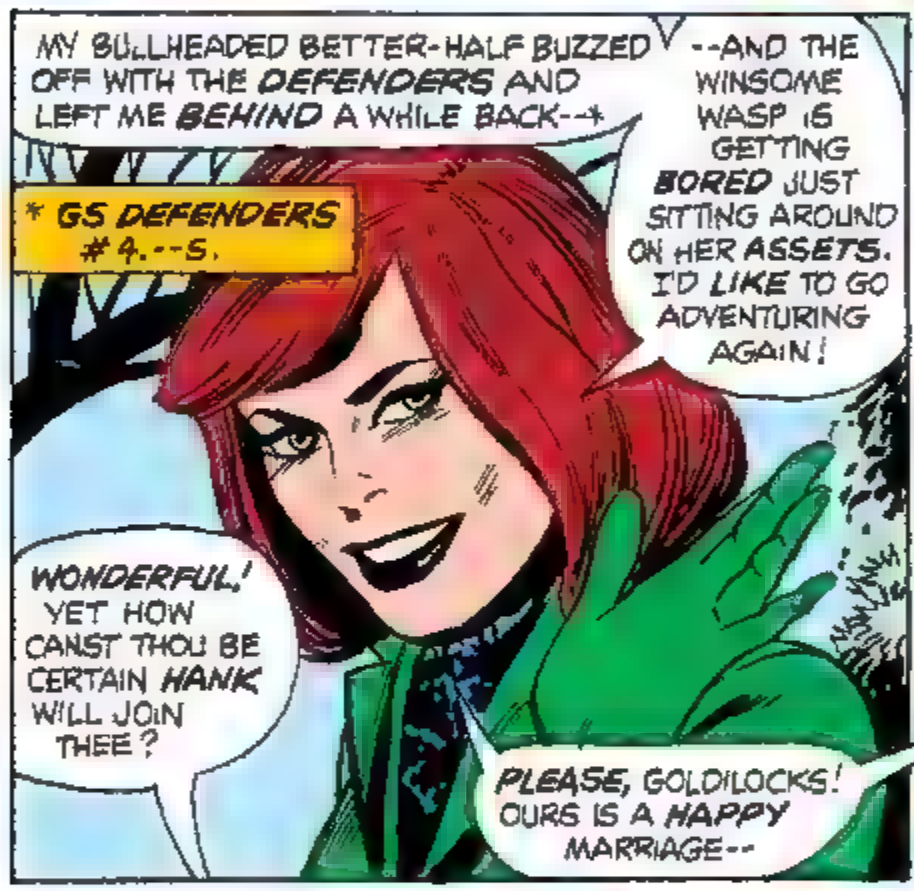

THIS DOTH BODE ILL. I HAD NOT EXPECTED SUCCESS OF AN INSTANT--
--YET, NEITHER DID I EXPECT SUCH VEHEMENCE WITH THE FAILURE.
WELL, WE'RE NOT TONY STARK'S SECURITY FORCE, BEING AN AVENGER'S NOT JUST A JOB...
...IT'S A WAY OF LIFE, AND YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING TO DEVOTE A LOT OF TIME TO IT. NOT EVERYONE CAN DO THAT!
YEAH, THIS AIN'T THE DEFENDERS WITH PEOPLE POPPIN' IN AND OUT. I TRIED THAT TRIP--*
--BUT IF I'M GONNA WORK UP ANY TEAM SPIRIT, I HAVE TO HAVE A REAL TEAM.
LISTEN, I KNOW WHO TO CALL...!
* DEFENDERS #7-11 / AVENGERS # 116-118.--L.

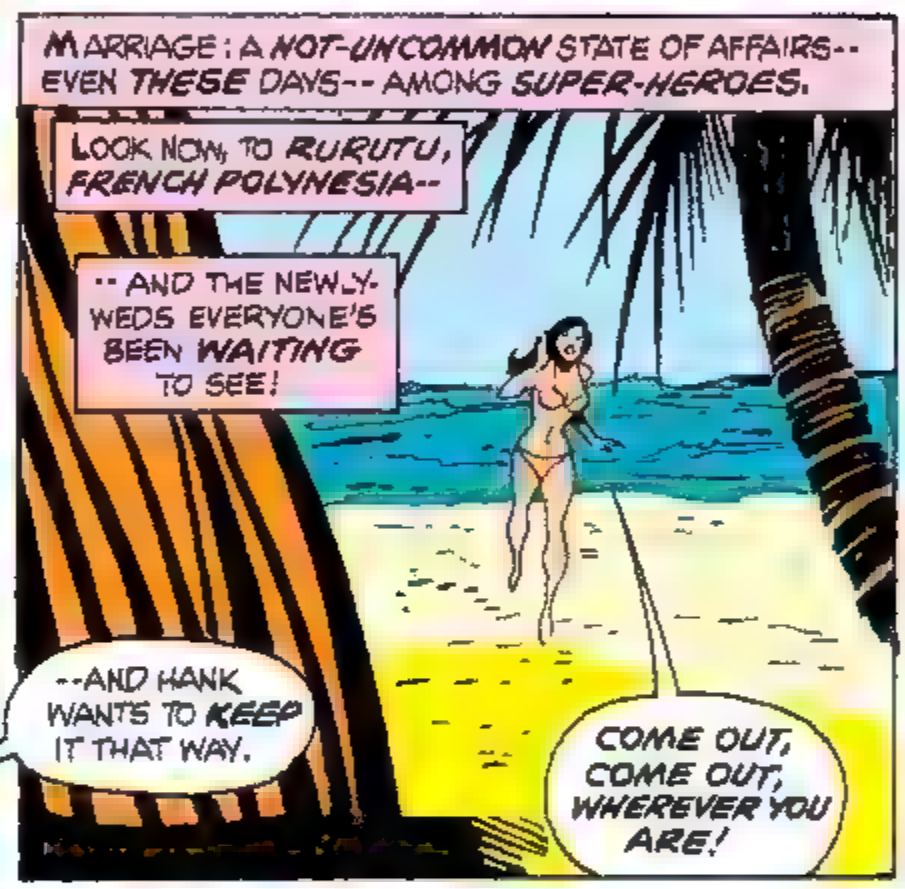
--SO YOU SAID, WHEN YOU WERE THE NOMAD, THAT YOU'D BE BACK AFTER FINISHIN' OFF THE SERPENT SQUAD, CAP.*
I KNOW I DID, HAWKEYE--BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THEN THAT THE RED SKULL WAS WAITING IN THE WINGS.
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE ANOTHER RAINCHECK, SORRY.
* #131.--L.

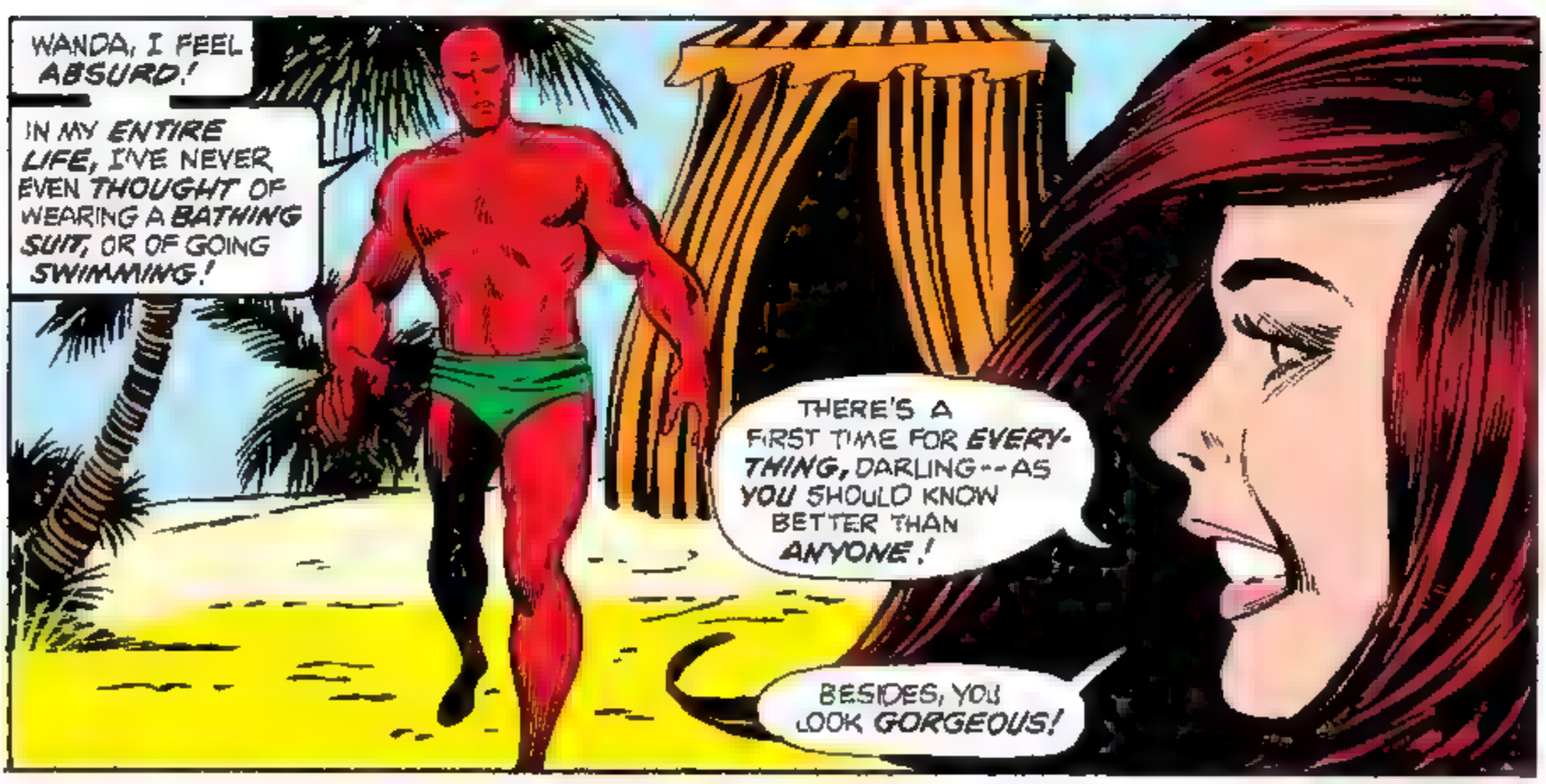
--SO WE THOUGHT, MAYBE YOU AND DAREDEVIL HAD WORKED OUT YOUR LOVE LIFE, TASHA.
IRON MAN, YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW WRONG YOU ARE! IF ANYTHING, WE'RE MORE CONFUSED THAN EVER...
BUT WE'RE NOT READY TO BREAK IT UP AS YET.

--THUS, SINCE THOU HAST BEEN AT LOOSE ENDS OF LATE, HERCULES...
AND THERE SHALL I REMAIN, THUNDER GOD. I HAVE ENJOYED MYSELF HUGELY SINCE I HAVE ONCE MORE TROD THIS WORLD--
--AND I NURTURE NO DESIRE TO LIMIT MY FREEDOM OF ACTION NOW.

--THUS, JANET, I DO ASSUME THAT THOU AND HANK WILL ALSO WISH TO RETAIN YOUR LEAVES OF ABSENCE.
WHY, NO, THOR. NOT AT ALL!
YOU DO NOT?
NO! IN FACT, I WAS ABOUT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU.

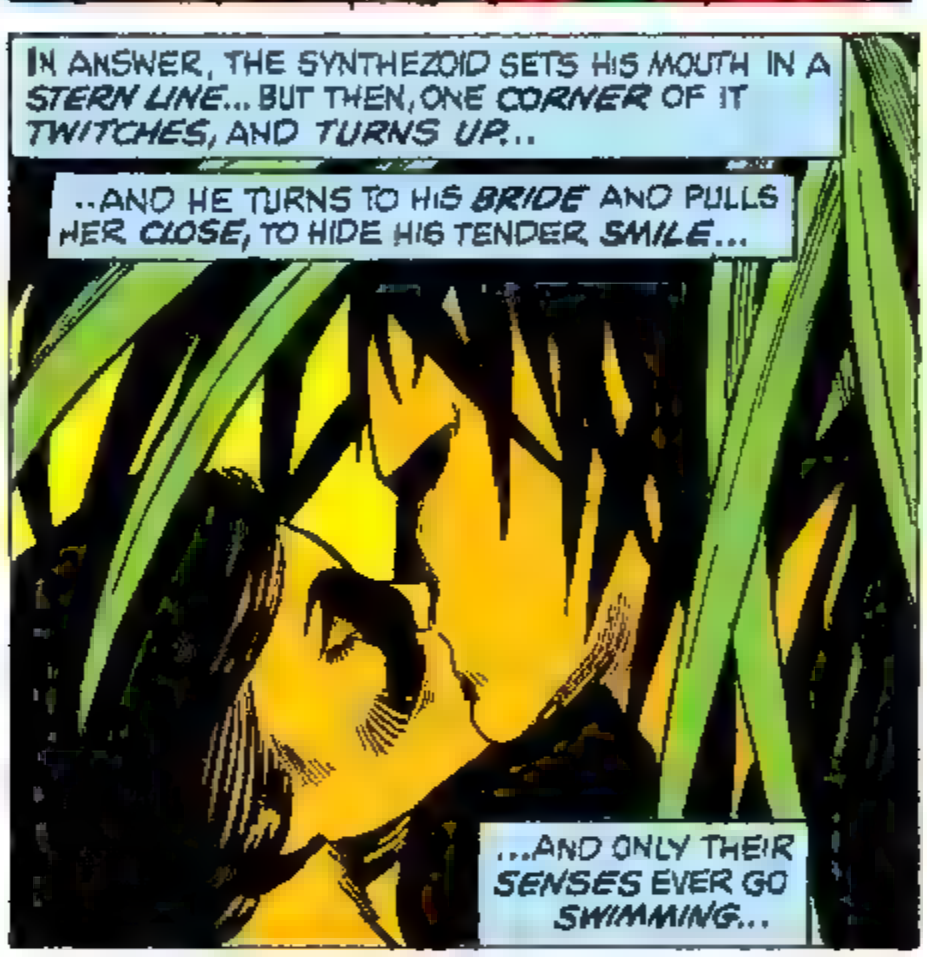

MY BULLHEADED BETTER-HALF BUZZED OFF WITH THE DEFENDERS AND LEFT ME BEHIND A WHILE BACK--*
* GS DEFENDERS #4.--S.
--AND THE WINSOME WASP IS GETTING BORED JUST SITTING AROUND ON HER ASSETS. I'D LIKE TO GO ADVENTURING AGAIN!
WONDERFUL! YET HOW CANST THOU BE CERTAIN HANK WILL JOIN THEE?
PLEASE, GOLDILOCKS! OURS IS A HAPPY MARRIAGE--

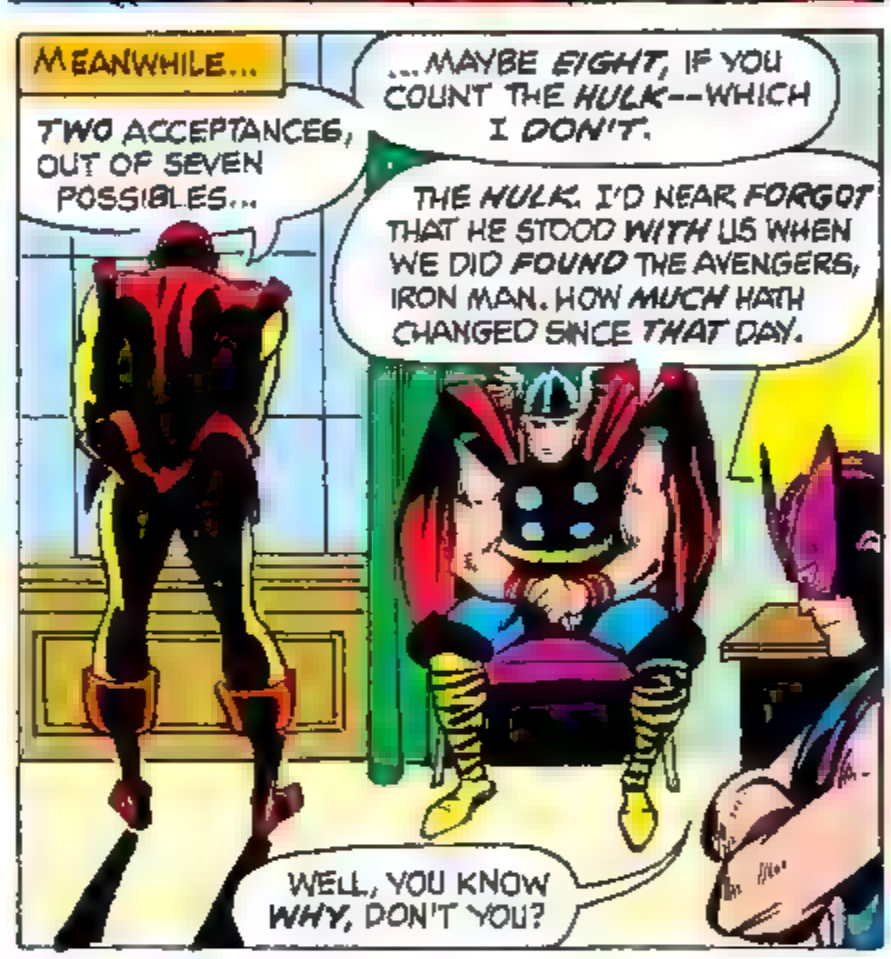

MARRIAGE: A NOT-UNCOMMON STATE OF AFFAIRS-- EVEN THESE DAYS-- AMONG SUPER-HEROES.
LOOK NOW, TO RURUTU, FRENCH POLYNESIA--
-- AND THE NEWLY-WEDS EVERYONE'S BEEN WAITING TO SEE!
--AND HANK WANTS TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.
COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE!


WANDA, I FEEL ABSURD!
IN MY ENTIRE LIFE, I'VE NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF WEARING A BATHING SUIT, OR OF GOING SWIMMING!
THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING, DARLING--AS YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE!
BESIDES, YOU LOOK GORGEOUS!

WELL, I DON'T FEEL GORGEOUS. I FEEL EMBARRASSED!
WHAT IF SOMEONE SHOULD SEE ME LIKE THIS?
THERE'S NO ONE ANYWHERE NEAR THIS BEACH, DARLING...

THE NATIVES AGREED TO STAY AWAY TO MAKE UP FOR TRYING TO SACRIFICE ME WHEN WE WERE HERE BEFORE, REMEMBER?*
YOU'RE JUST OFF-BALANCE BECAUSE YOU'RE STARTING OUT ON A NEW LIFE, UNLIKE ANY YOU OR THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH HAVE EVER KNOWN--
--AREN'T YOU, DARK EYES?
* #116.--L.

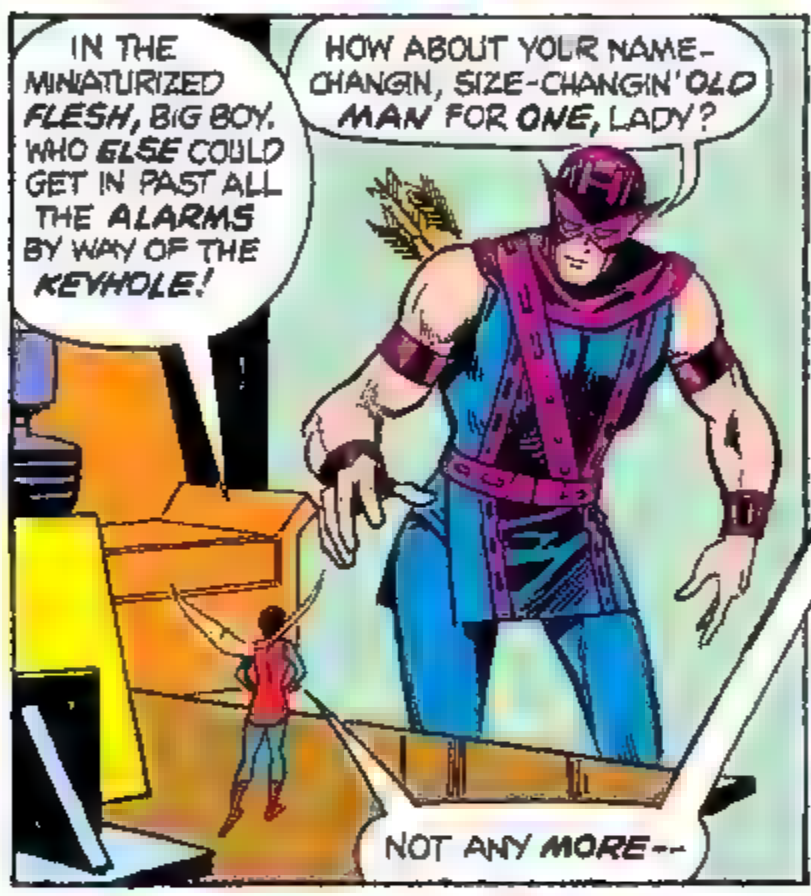

IN ANSWER, THE SYNTHEZOID SETS HIS MOUTH IN A STERN LINE... BUT THEN, ONE CORNER OF IT TWITCHES, AND TURNS UP...
..AND HE TURNS TO HIS BRIDE AND PULLS HER CLOSE, TO HIDE HIS TENDER SMILE...
...AND ONLY THEIR SENSES EVER GO SWIMMING...

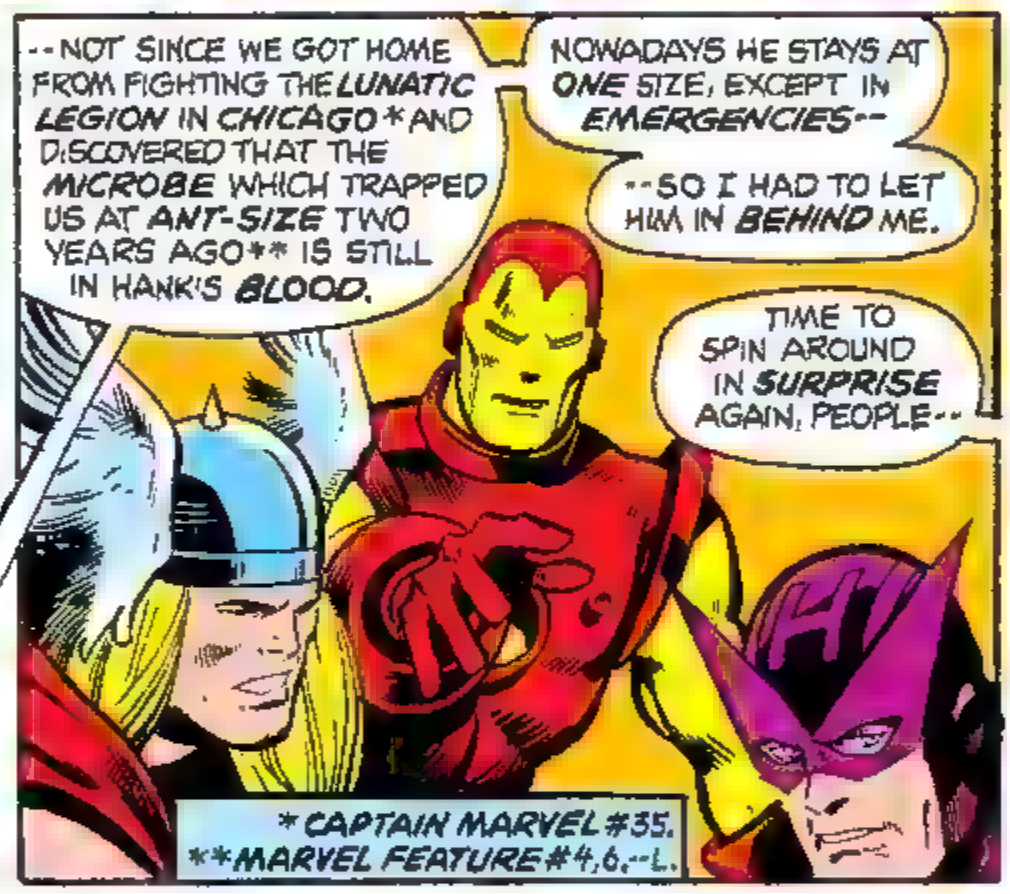

MEANWHILE...
TWO ACCEPTANCES, OUT OF SEVEN POSSIBLES...
...MAYBE EIGHT, IF YOU COUNT THE HULK--WHICH I DON'T.
THE HULK. I'D NEAR FORGOT THAT HE STOOD WITH US WHEN WE DID FOUND THE AVENGERS, IRON MAN. HOW MUCH HATH CHANGED SINCE THAT DAY.
WELL, YOU KNOW WHY, DON'T YOU?

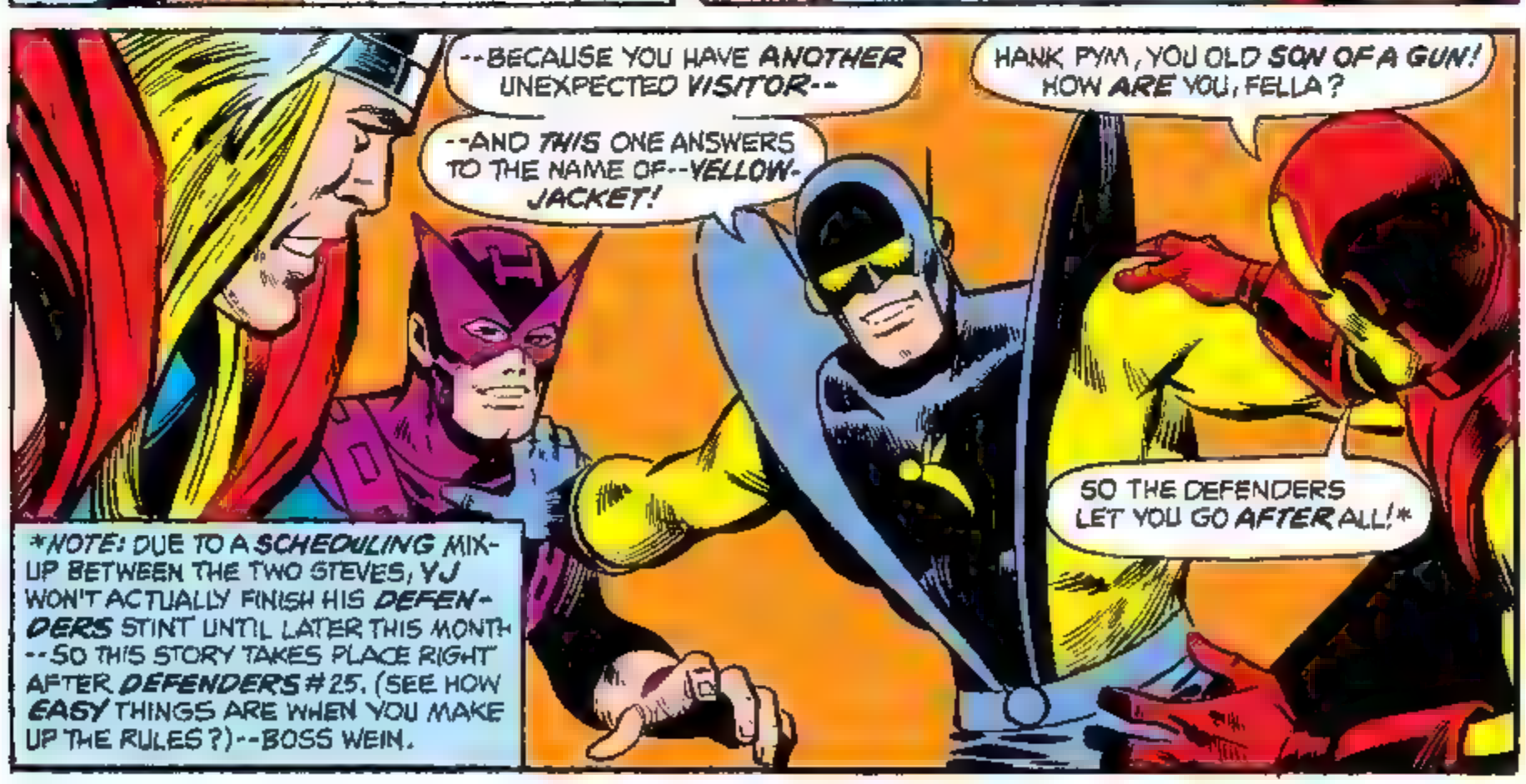
IT'S ALL THE OTHER GROUPS THAT HAVE SPRUNG UP SINCE THEN: THE X-MEN, THE DEFENDERS, THE INHUMANS!
WE'RE NOT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN ANY MORE--
--AND IN ADDITION, BEIN' A SOLO SUPER-STAR IS A DREAM MORE PEOPLE THAN ME HAVE HAD!
IF YOU'RE SAYING THAT BEING AN AVENGER IS OUT OF STYLE, MISTER--!
HOLD, OLD FRIEND. THERE BE REASON IN HIS WORDS.

SURE! WE'RE THE OLD GUARD AFTER ALL THESE YEARS! IT'S EASY TO TAKE US FOR GRANTED.
OH, I DON'T KNOW, CLINT. YOUR BIG BROWN EYES STILL KNOCK ME OUT.
HUH? WHO SAID THAT?

ME, YOU HANDSOME BRUTE! THE MODERN AMERICAN TINKERBELL HERSELF!
WASPIE!


IN THE MINIATURIZED FLESH, BIG BOY. WHO ELSE COULD GET IN PAST ALL THE ALARMS BY WAY OF THE KEYHOLE!
HOW ABOUT YOUR NAME-CHANGIN, SIZE-CHANGIN' OLD MAN FOR ONE, LADY?
NOT ANY MORE--

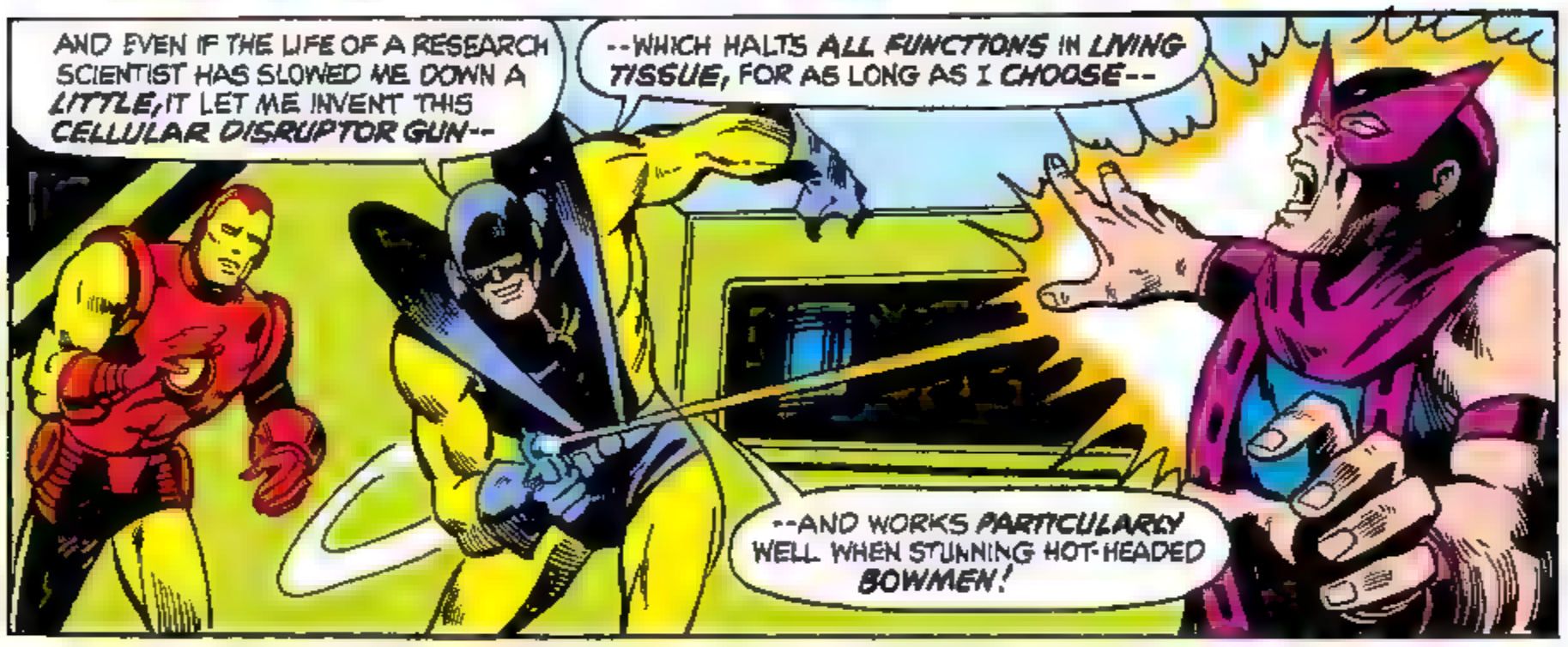

--NOT SINCE WE GOT HOME FROM FIGHTING THE LUNATIC LEGION IN CHICAGO* AND DISCOVERED THAT THE MICROBE WHICH TRAPPED US AT ANT-SIZE TWO YEARS AGO** IS STILL IN HANK'S BLOOD.
NOWADAYS HE STAYS AT ONE SIZE, EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES--
--SO I HAD TO LET HIM IN BEHIND ME.
TIME TO SPIN AROUND IN SURPRISE AGAIN, PEOPLE--
* CAPTAIN MARVEL #35.
** MARVEL FEATURE #4,6.--L.


--BECAUSE YOU HAVE ANOTHER UNEXPECTED VISITOR--
--AND THIS ONE ANSWERS TO THE NAME OF--YELLOW-JACKET!
HANK PYM, YOU OLD SON OF A GUN! HOW ARE YOU, FELLA?
SO THE DEFENDERS LET YOU GO AFTER ALL!*
*NOTE: DUE TO A SCHEDULING MIX-UP BETWEEN THE TWO STEVES, VJ WON'T ACTUALLY FINISH HIS DEFENDERS STINT UNTIL LATER THIS MONTH --SO THIS STORY TAKES PLACE RIGHT AFTER DEFENDERS #25. (SEE HOW EASY THINGS ARE WHEN YOU MAKE UP THE RULES?)--BOSS WEIN.

THE DEFENDERS DIDN'T "LET ME GO," SHELLHEAD. YOU CAN COME AND GO AS YOU PLEASE WITH THEM--
--JUST LIKE A CERTAIN ARCHER WHO FOUGHT ON THEIR SIDE IN THE AVENGERS-DEFENDERS CLASH, BUT NOW SPENDS A LOT OF TIME PUTTING THEM DOWN, FROM WHAT I OVER-HEAR!
HEY--

--ARE YOU LOOKIN' FOR A STOMPED STINGER, BUDDY?
WE BOTH SPLIT THE AVENGERS, TO DO OUR OWN THING, AND WE BOTH DRIFTED IN WITH THAT CRAZY CREW--
--AND WE BOTH DECIDED NOT TO STAY--

--DIDN'T WE, YJ?
THINK YA STILL GOT THE OLD STUFF, PAL?
FOOM!
I DO ALL RIGHT!


AND EVEN IF THE LIFE OF A RESEARCH SCIENTIST HAS SLOWED ME DOWN A LITTLE, IT LET ME INVENT THIS CELLULAR DISRUPTOR GUN--
--WHICH HALTS ALL FUNCTIONS IN LIVING TISSUE, FOR AS LONG AS I CHOOSE--
--AND WORKS PARTICULARLY WELL WHEN STUNNING HOT-HEADED BOWMEN!

SORRY, CLINT, BUT I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE PROVING MYSELF IN SOME MOCK COMBAT RIGHT NOW--
--ESPECIALLY IF IT'S NOT ENTIRELY MOCK!
JAN TOLD ME YOU NEEDED A QUORUM, AND SHE WAS GOING, SO I CAME, TOO--

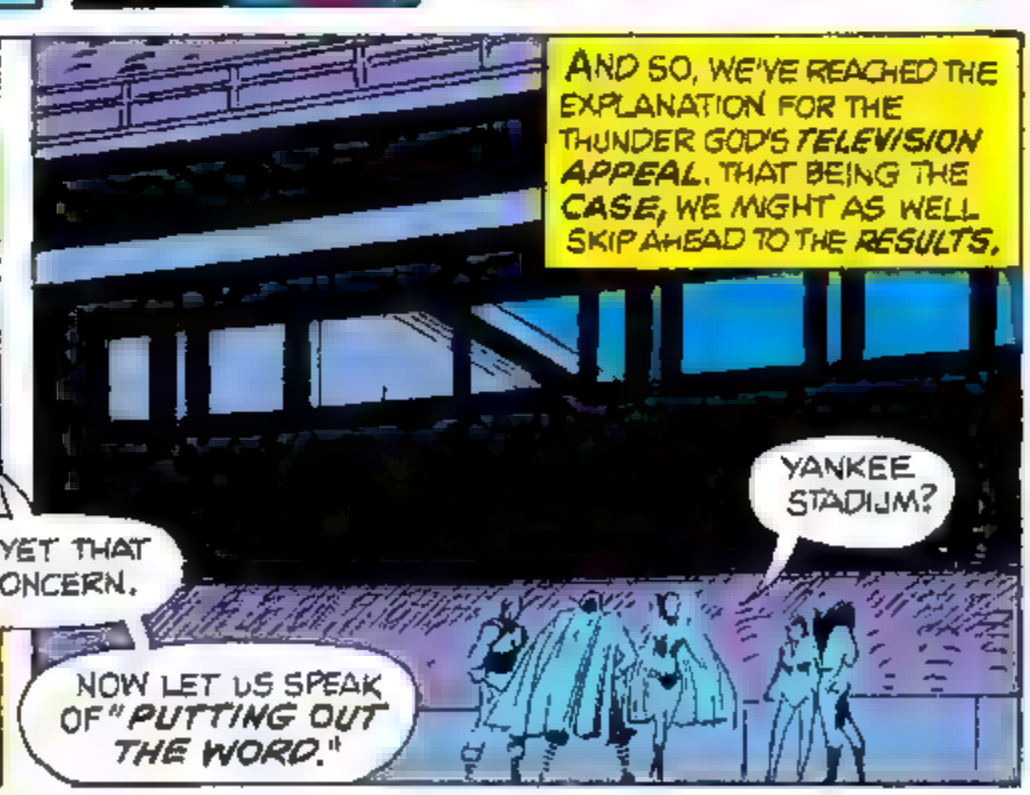
--BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU, THOR, THAT I'VE COME TO LIKE A LIFE OF RESEARCH, AND IF IT WERE SOLELY UP TO ME, I'D OPT FOR SPENDING MOST OF MY TIME ON THAT.
THEN WE DO THANK THEE FOR THY SACRIFICE--
--THOUGH THOU COULDST HAVE ALLOWED THY WIFE TO COME ALONE.

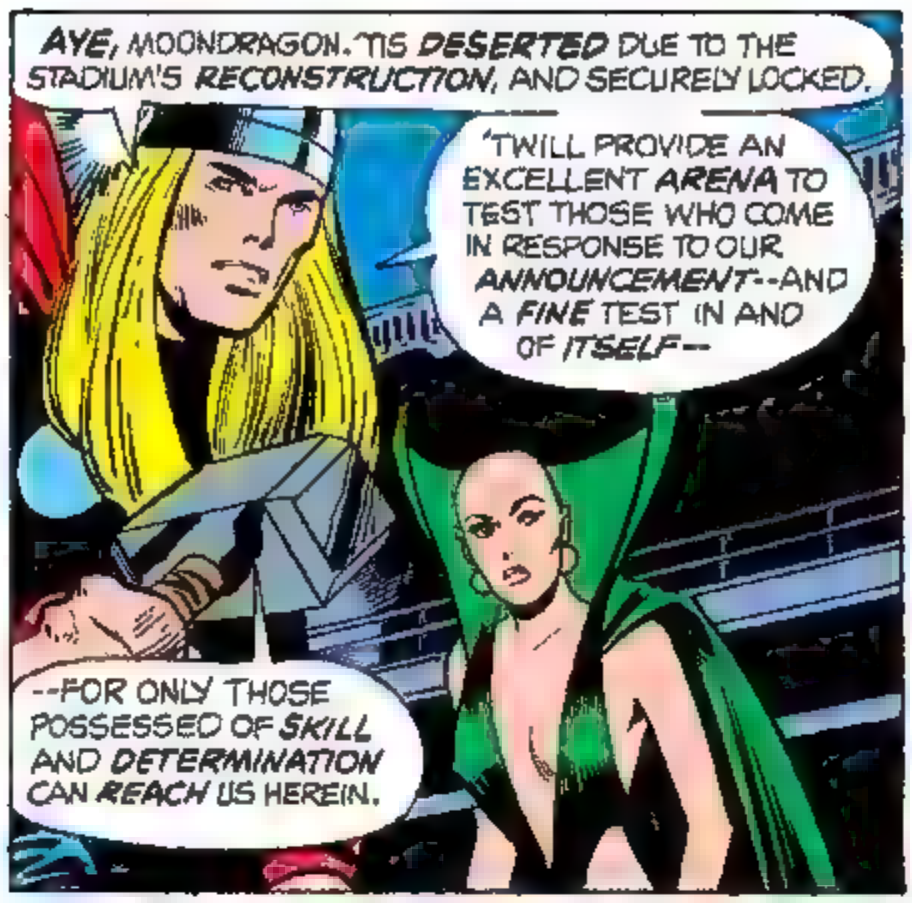
"NO, SMILES HENRY PYM, PH.D., "JAN AND I ARE A TEAM. WE'RE NOT TOGETHER ALL THE TIME, CERTAINLY, BUT I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE APART FROM HER FOR ANY GREAT WHILE!"

"HE'S HELPLESS WITHOUT ME, YOU KNOW," ADDS JAN IN A STAGE WHISPER. "THE BIG BOOB WOULD WEAR THE SAME SOCKS FOR A MONTH IF I WEREN'T AROUND.

"BUT I WANT TO BE AROUND, SO EVERYTHING WORKS OUT GREAT!" SHE GRINS.

*SINCE DEFENDERS #11. **LAST SEEN IN AVENGERS SPECIAL #2. --LEN,

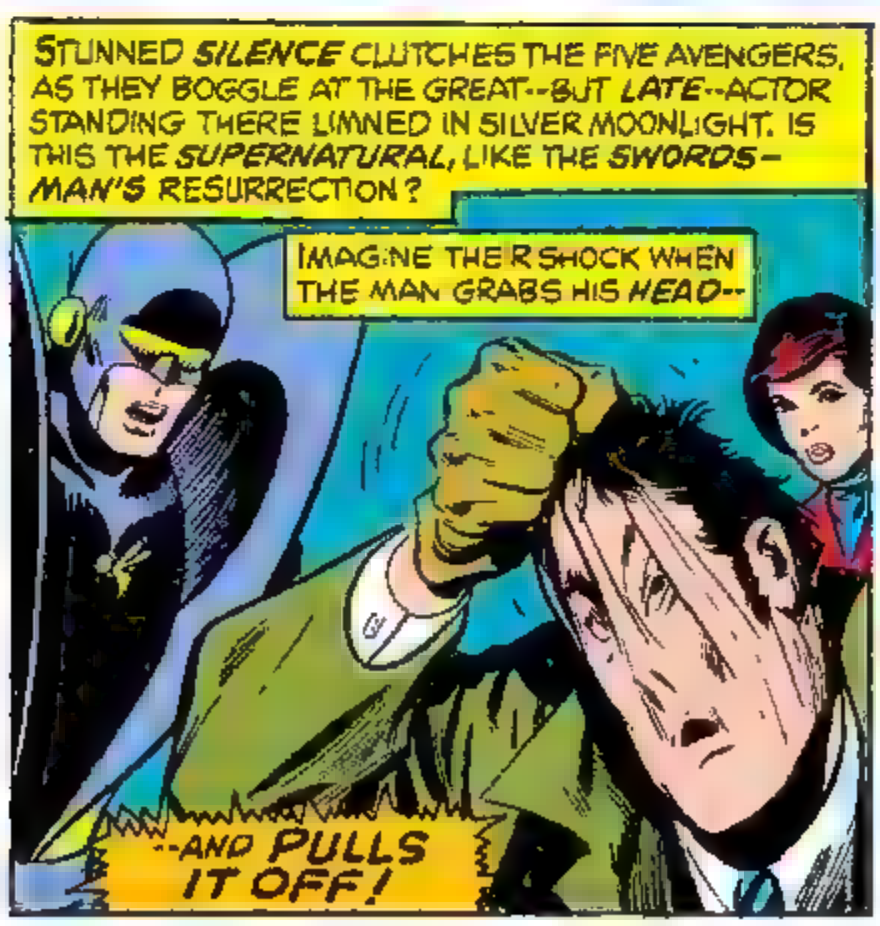



AYE, MOONDRAGON. 'TIS DESERTED DUE TO THE STADIUM'S RECONSTRUCTION, AND SECURELY LOCKED.
'TWILL PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT ARENA TO TEST THOSE WHO COME IN RESPONSE TO OUR ANNOUNCEMENT--AND A FINE TEST IN AND OF ITSELF--
--FOR ONLY THOSE POSSESSED OF SKILL AND DETERMINATION CAN REACH US HEREIN.

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT I THINK WE HAVE OUR FIRST CUSTOMER!
WHO IS HE? I DON'T RECOGNIZE HIM IN THAT OVER-COAT!

WHO AM I? DON'T PLAY DUMB, YOU MUGGS, OR I'LL HAVETA SEND SOME O' THE BOYS AROUND, SEE?
MOTHER OF MERCY, THAT'D BE THE END OF YOU!
THAT VOICE! IT CAN'T BE, BUT IT'S--

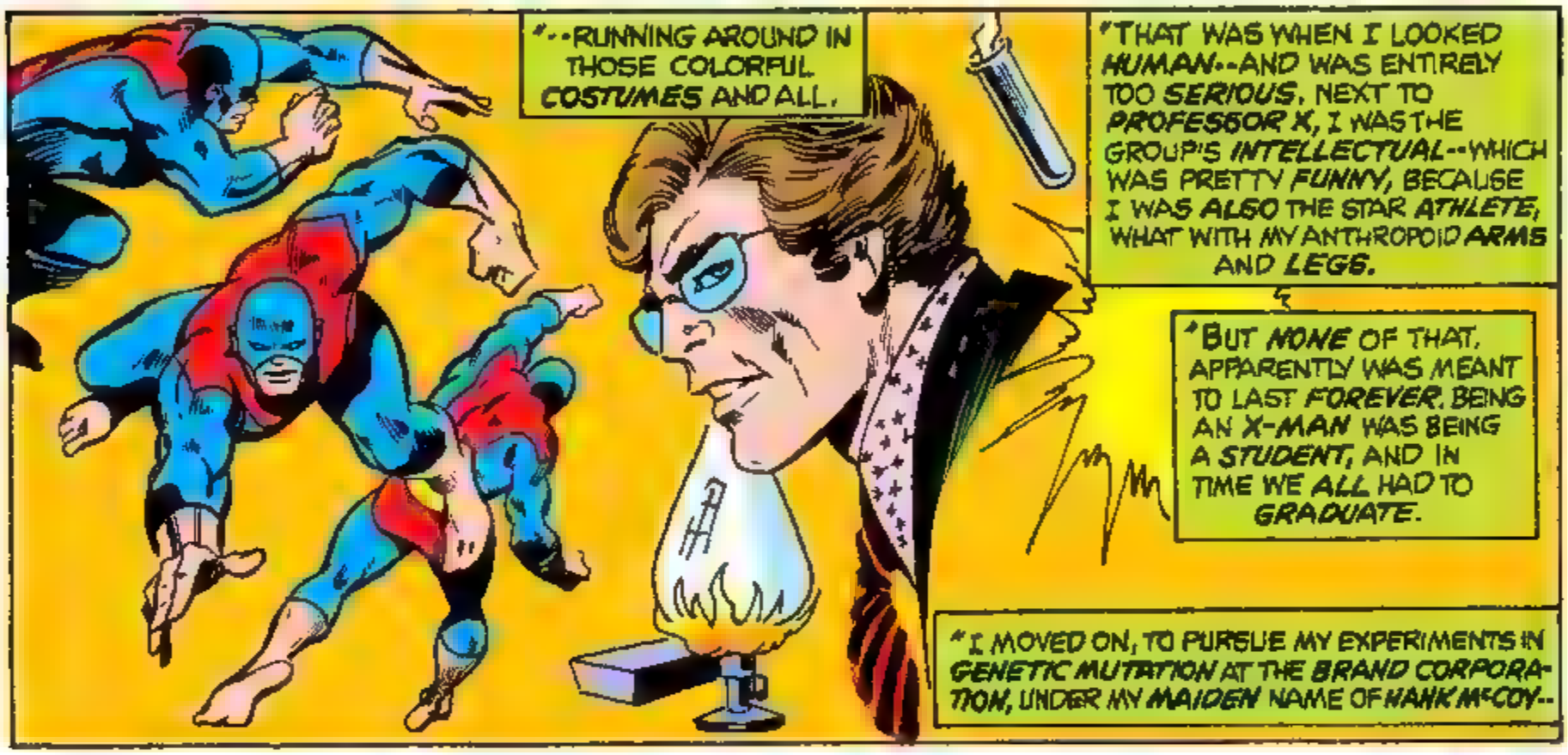
--EDWARD G. ROBINSON!
THAT'S RIGHT! IT CAN'T BE, BUT IT'S--


STUNNED SILENCE CLUTCHES THE FIVE AVENGERS, AS THEY BOGGLE AT THE GREAT--BUT LATE--ACTOR STANDING THERE LIMNED IN SILVER MOONLIGHT. IS THIS THE SUPERNATURAL, LIKE THE SWORDSMAN'S RESURRECTION?
IMAGINE THEIR SHOCK WHEN THE MAN GRABS HIS HEAD--
--AND PULLS IT OFF!

HIYA, KIDS! HIYA! HIYA!
PRETTY GOOD DISGUISE, HUH?
GOOD LORD! IT'S--IT'S--

--THE BEAST!
THE VERY SAME--WELL, A LITTLE OLDER AND A LOT WISER, MAYBE--
--AND A WHOLE LOT MORE LAID BACK--

--BUT IT IS MORE THAN LIKELY ME, COME TO MAKE OUT AN APPLICATION IN HOPES OF MAKING THE TEAM, JUST LIKE YOU ASKED.
WHY? AREN'T YOU AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER?
WAIT A MINUTE! AREN'T YOU AN X-MAN?
I USED TO BE AN X-MAN--


"--RUNNING AROUND IN THOSE COLORFUL COSTUMES AND ALL.
"THAT WAS WHEN I LOOKED HUMAN--AND WAS ENTIRELY TOO SERIOUS. NEXT TO PROFESSOR X, I WAS THE GROUP'S INTELLECTUAL--WHICH WAS PRETTY FUNNY, BECAUSE I WAS ALSO THE STAR ATHLETE, WHAT WITH MY ANTHROPOID ARMS AND LEGS.
"BUT NONE OF THAT, APPARENTLY WAS MEANT TO LAST FOREVER. BEING AN X-MAN WAS BEING A STUDENT, AND IN TIME WE ALL HAD TO GRADUATE.
"I MOVED ON, TO PURSUE MY EXPERIMENTS IN GENETIC MUTATION AT THE BRAND CORPORATION, UNDER MY MAIDEN NAME OF HANK McCOY--

HOLD! SPEAK NOT OF THY SECRET IDENTITY! WE DO NOT REQUIRE SUCH DISCLOSURES!
IT'S COOL, THUNDER GOD--IT'S COOL. IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO ME, BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER IDENTITY ANY MORE--
-- SECRET OR OTHERWISE.

THAT'S THE PART I WAS GETTING TO. SEE--
--AFTER I'D BEEN WITH THE CORPORATION FOUR MONTHS, I STUMBLED ACROSS A SPY PLOT, WHICH I NATURALLY FIGURED TO FIGHT!*
THE TROUBLE WAS HANK McCOY'S ABNORMAL BODY WAS WELL-KNOWN BY THEN, SO SIMPLY SLIPPING ON A COSTUME WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH OF A DISGUISE.
TOO QUICKLY, I DECIDED TO MAKE USE OF MY EXPERIMENTAL FORMULA FOR THE CHEMICAL CAUSE OF MUTATION--
* AMAZING ADVENTURES #11.--L

"--AND I MUTATED THE MUTANT MAN--

"--INTO--

"A REAL BEAST!

"ONLY LATER DID I DISCOVER THAT I COULDN'T CHANGE BACK--THAT I WAS TRAPPED IN THIS FORM FOREVER!

"AT FIRST I WAS HORRIFIED, OF COURSE. I TRIED EVERYTHING I COULD THINK OF TO MAKE BELIEVE I COULD GO ON THE WAY I HAD BEEN--EVEN TO THE POINT OF WORKING UP RUBBER MASKS AND GLOVES SO I COULD PASS FOR HANK McCOY--

"--BUT EVENTUALLY, IT ALL GOT TOO HEAVY. I HAD TO DROP OUT OF SIGHT AND COME TO TERMS WITH MY NEW SELF--

"--SO I DID.

"I LET TIME PASS HOWEVER IT WANTED. I WATCHED OLD MOVIES, READ SOME CASTANEDA, LISTENED TO STEVIE WONDER, AND, BY AND LARGE, PUT MY CRUEL FATE OUT OF MY MIND.

"AFTER A WHILE, I FOUND I HAD A PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS, WITHOUT MY EVEN WORKING AT IT."

I FIGURED THAT THIS WAS WHAT I AM NOW, SO I MIGHT AS WELL MAKE THE BEST OF IT. THAT INCLUDES REALIZING THAT ANY MASK I WEAR, EVEN HANK McCOY'S, IS ONLY PRETEND--

--SO I CAN PRETEND TO BE ANYBODY I WANT! YOU SHOULD SEE MY BOGART!

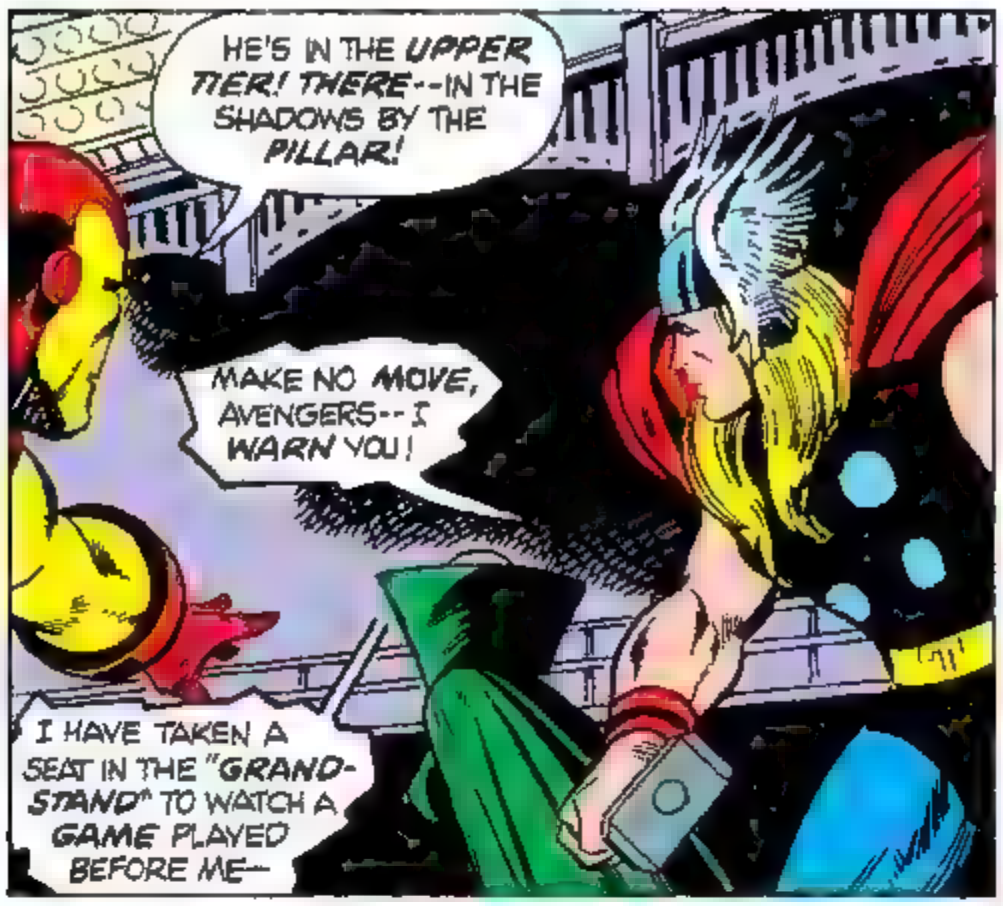
I ALSO REALIZED ONE MORE THING--VERY SURPRISING:--

-- I LIKE SUPER-HEROING, AND I LIKE IT WITH A GROUP.

THEN I HOPE YOU'LL LIKE TO DIE WITH THIS GROUP, MONSTER!

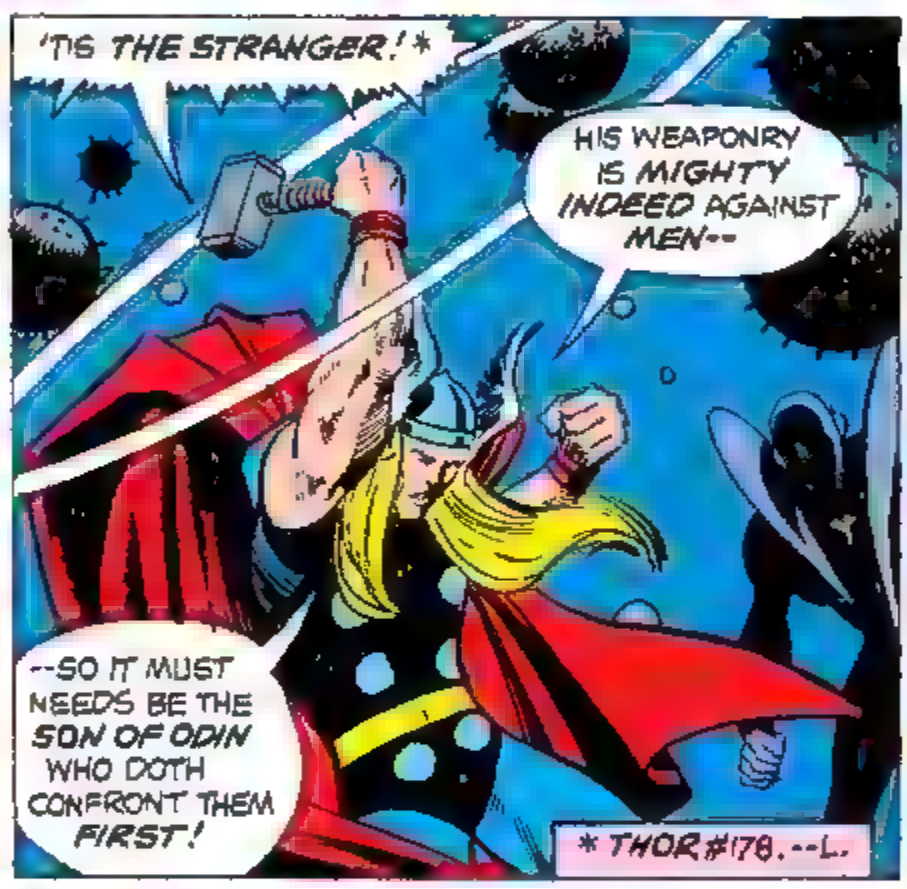
HUH?

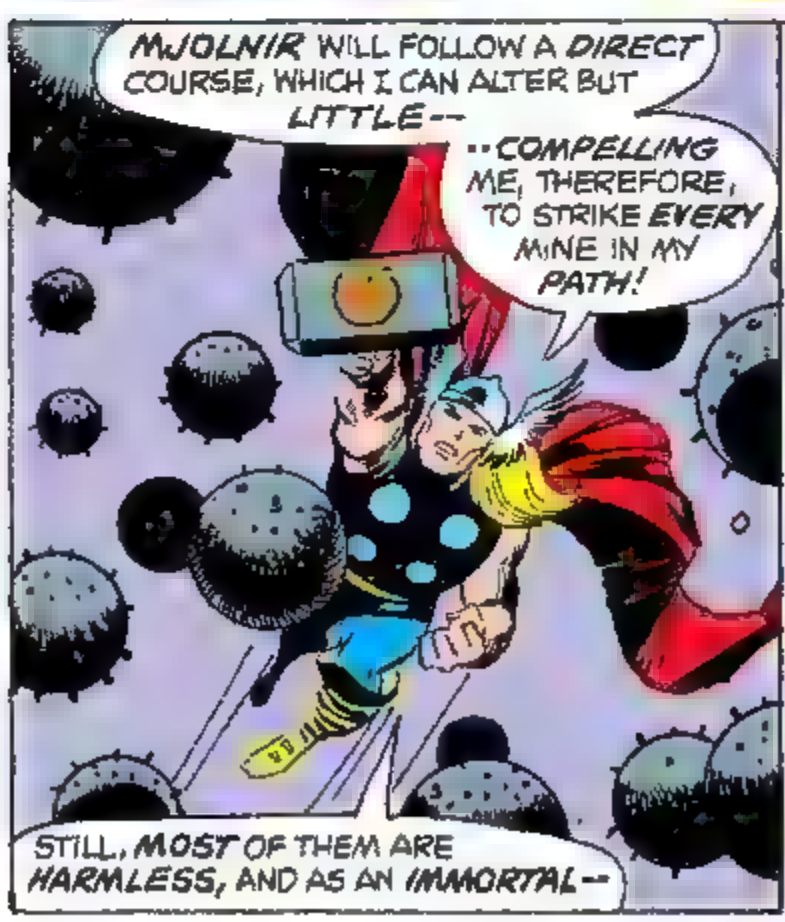
WHO'S CRABBIN' MY ACT?

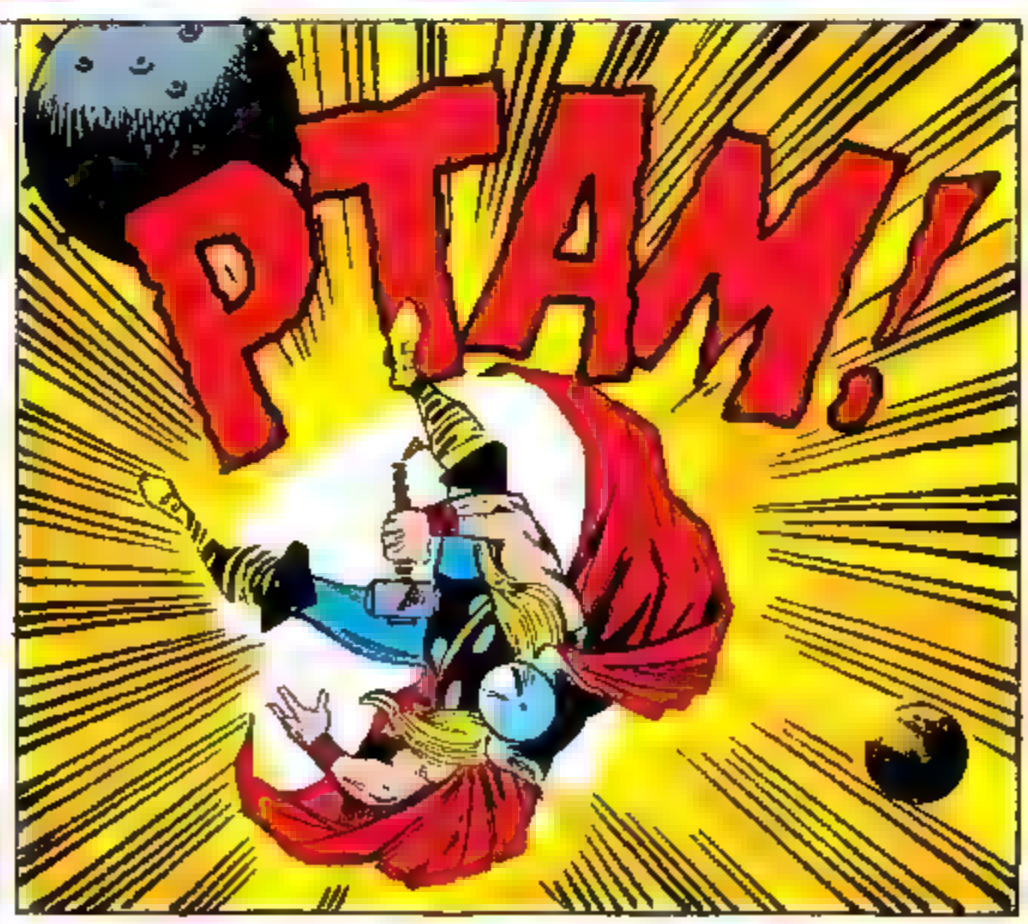

HE'S IN THE UPPER TIER! THERE--IN THE SHADOWS BY THE PILLAR!
MAKE NO MOVE, AVENGERS--I WARN YOU!
I HAVE TAKEN A SEAT IN THE "GRAND-STAND" TO WATCH A GAME PLAYED BEFORE ME--

--A GAME YOU WILL PLAY AGAINST THESE HOVER-MINES I MASSED INVISIBLY AROUND YOU WHILE YOU CHATTERED!
AS I RENDER THEM VISIBLE, NOTE THEIR VAST NUMBER--
--HOW THEY COVER THE FOOTBALL FIELD--

--TO A HEIGHT OF FIFTY "YARDS." THE SPORT IS THAT ONLY ONE IN FIVE IS ARMED--
YOU SIX HAVE SIX "MINUTES" TO REACH A DISARMAMENT LEVER BEYOND THE MINES, FOR THEN I SHALL DETONATE EVERYTHING MANUALLY.
--BUT EACH OF THOSE CONTAINS UNEARTHLY POWER!
WE'RE IN FOR IT, FOLKS!
I KNOW THAT VOICE!
AS DO I, BEAST!

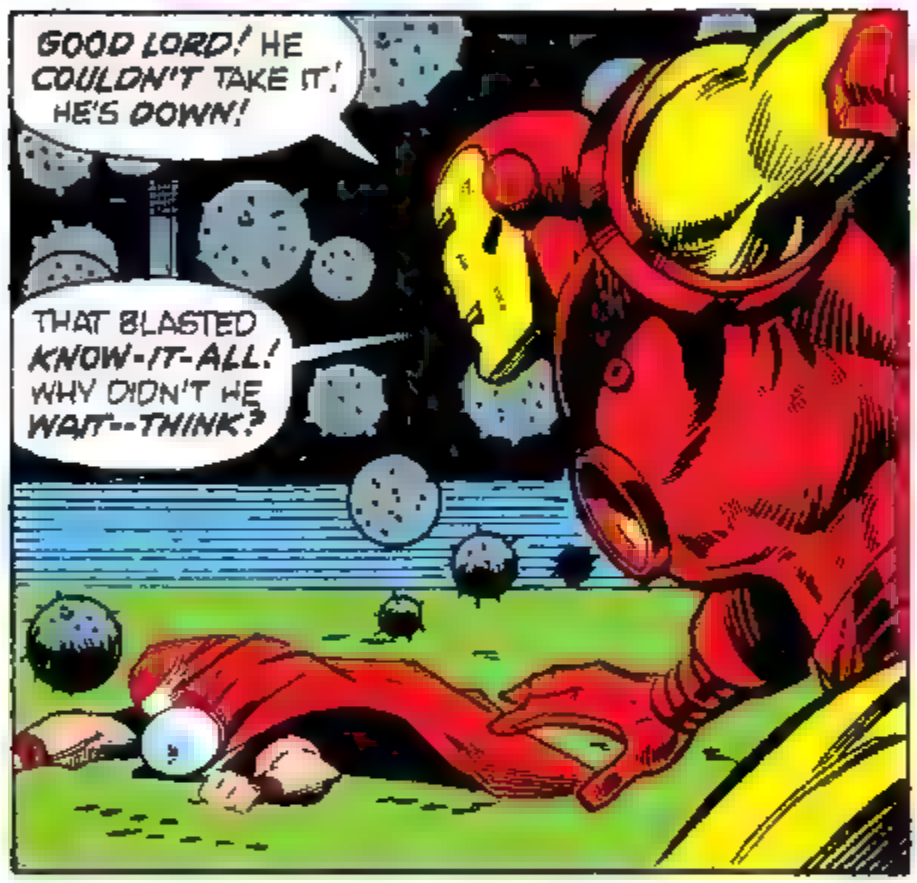

'TIS THE STRANGER! *
HIS WEAPONRY IS MIGHTY INDEED AGAINST MEN--
--SO IT MUST NEEDS BE THE SON OF ODIN WHO DOTH CONFRONT THEM FIRST!
* THOR #178.--L.

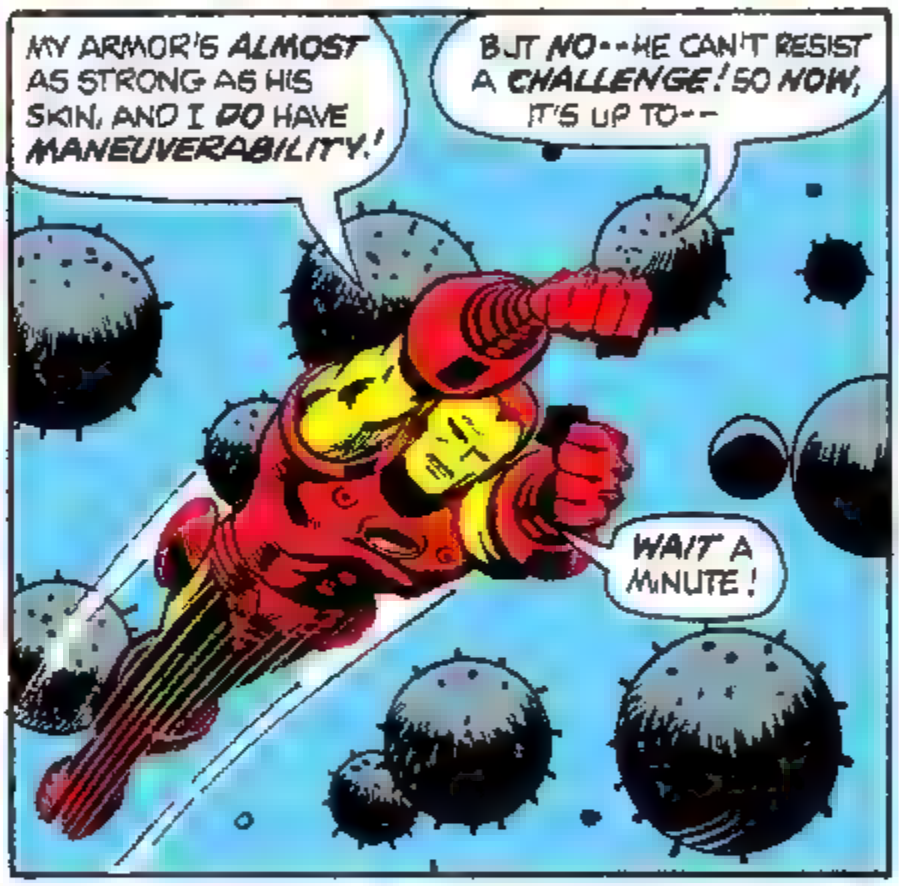

MJOLNIR WILL FOLLOW A DIRECT COURSE, WHICH I CAN ALTER BUT LITTLE--
--COMPELLING ME, THEREFORE, TO STRIKE EVERY MINE IN MY PATH!
STILL, MOST OF THEM ARE HARMLESS, AND AS AN IMMORTAL--

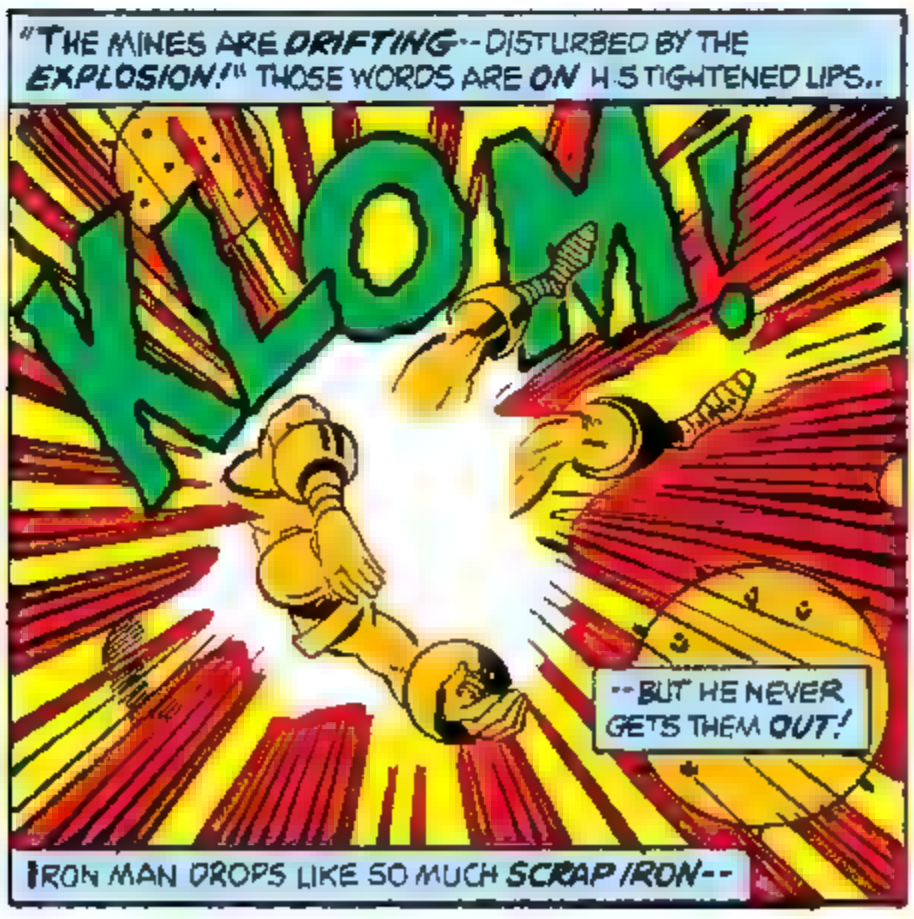

PTAM!

THAT--WAS MORE THAN I HAD EXPECTED, STRANGER!
BUT THE GOD OF THUNDER--
--SHALL PRESS ON!

KLOM!

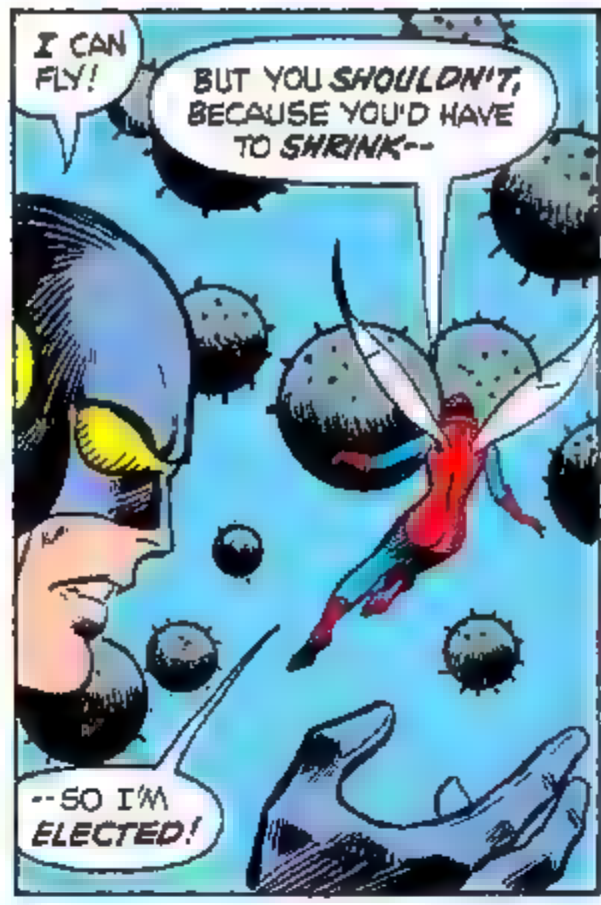

GOOD LORD! HE COULDN'T TAKE IT! HE'S DOWN!
THAT BLASTED KNOW-IT-ALL! WHY DIDN'T HE WAIT--THINK?


MY ARMOR'S ALMOST AS STRONG AS HIS SKIN, AND I DO HAVE MANEUVERABILITY!
BUT NO--HE CAN'T RESIST A CHALLENGE! SO NOW, IT'S UP TO--
WAIT A MINUTE!

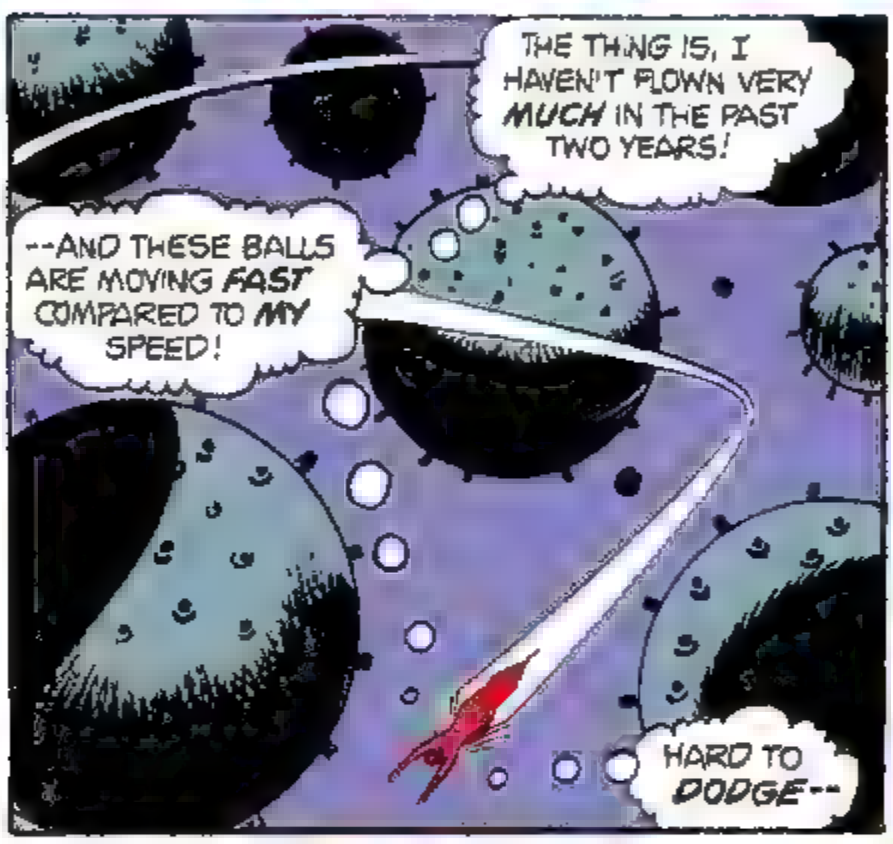

"THE MINES ARE DRIFTING--DISTURBED BY THE EXPLOSION!" THOSE WORDS ARE ON HIS TIGHTENED LIPS..
KLOM!
--BUT HE NEVER GETS THEM OUT!
IRON MAN DROPS LIKE SO MUCH SCRAP IRON--

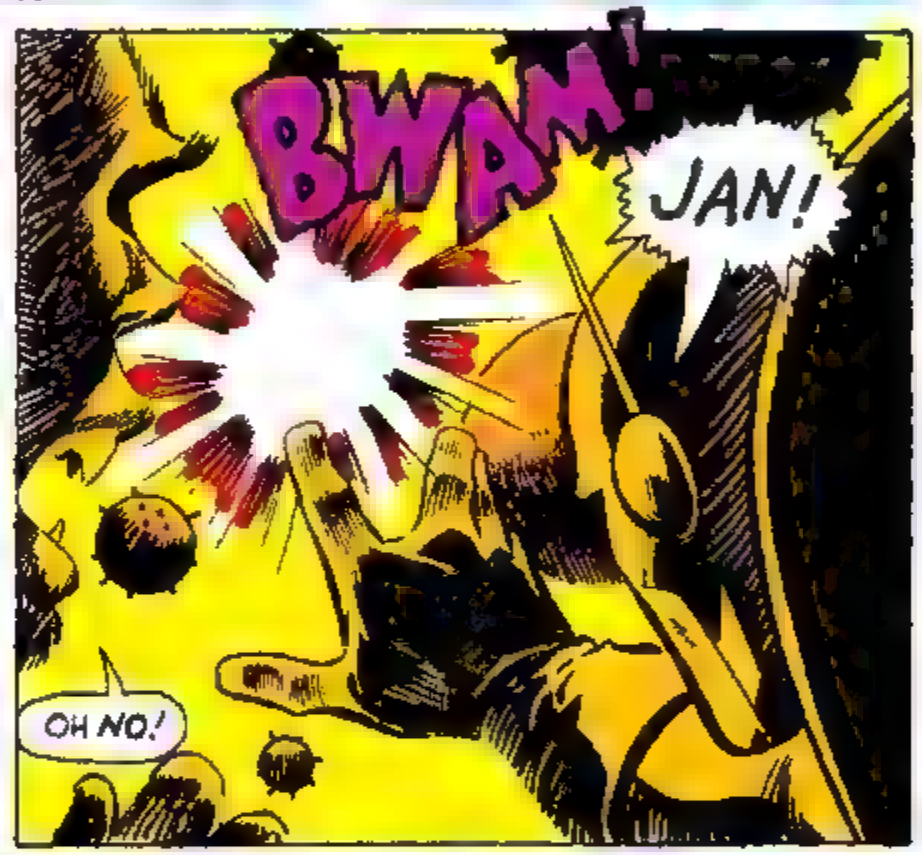
--AND SHOCK GIVES WAY TO ONE BREATHLESS VOICE.
THE TWO STRONGEST AVENGERS--DOWN ALMOST BEFORE WE GOT STARTED!
THAT'S GOING TO BE A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW!
NOW JUST HOLD ON!

THOSE MINES ARE BOBBING AROUND LIKE CORKS OUT THERE!
DON'T BE A PARTY POOP, LOVER!
I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT WHO CAN FLY.

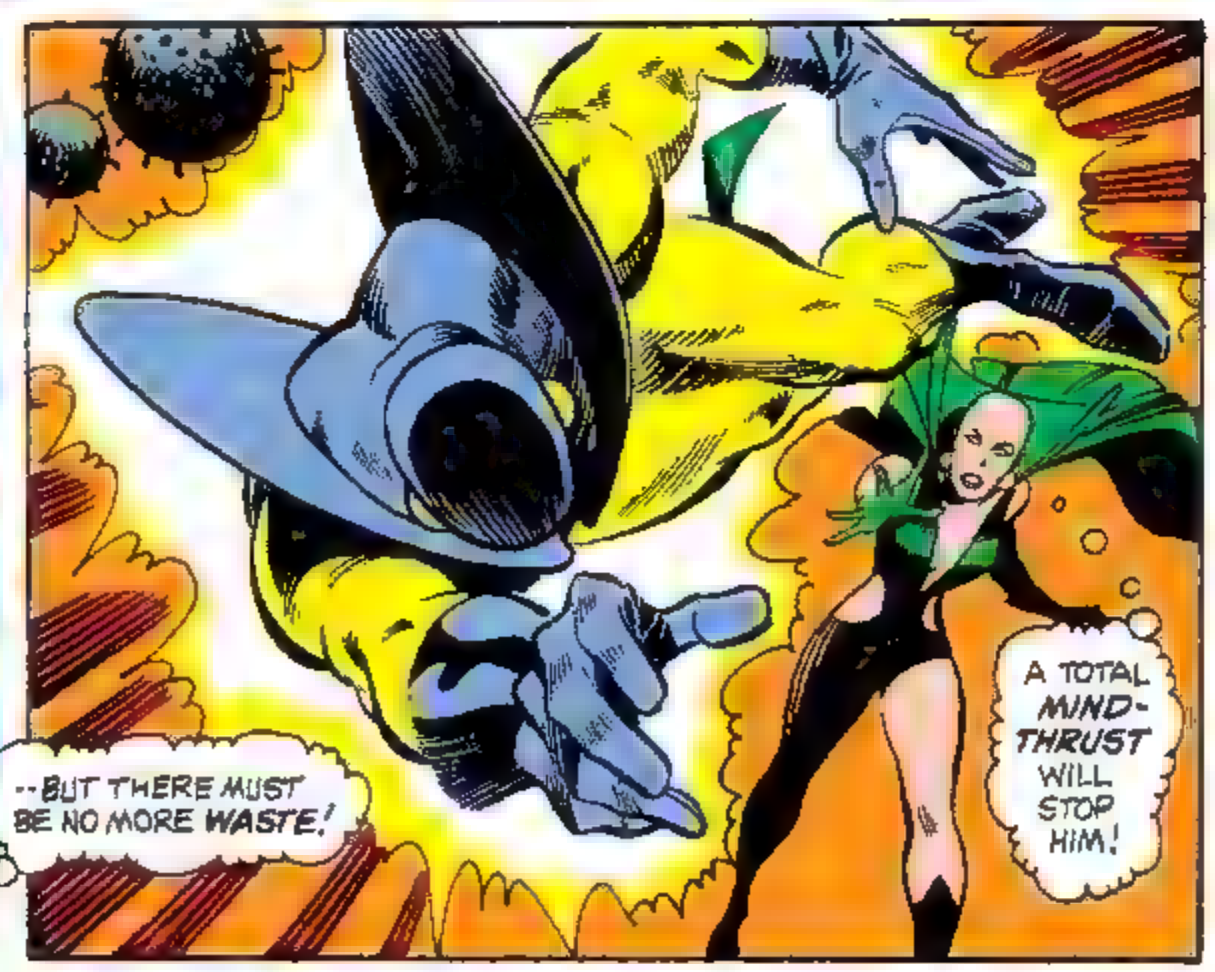

I CAN FLY!
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T, BECAUSE YOU'D HAVE TO SHRINK--
--SO I'M ELECTED!

RELAX, NOW! I WAS THE ONE WHO WANTED ADVENTURE--
-- AND A WASP'S A REAL SMALL TARGET!


THE THING IS, I HAVEN'T FLOWN VERY MUCH IN THE PAST TWO YEARS!
--AND THESE BALLS ARE MOVING FAST COMPARED TO MY SPEED!
HARD TO DODGE--


BWAM!
JAN!
OH NO!

JAN!
HALT, HENRY PYM!
USELESS! HE IS HEEDLESS OF HIS PERSONAL SAFETY!


--BUT THERE MUST BE NO MORE WASTE!
A TOTAL MIND-THRUST WILL STOP HIM!

--SO MAYBE AN ANIMAL CAN SUCCEED WHERE GODS AND INSECTS FAILED!

HE LOPES FORWARD N HIS NORMAL CROUCH, CAUTIOUSLY--

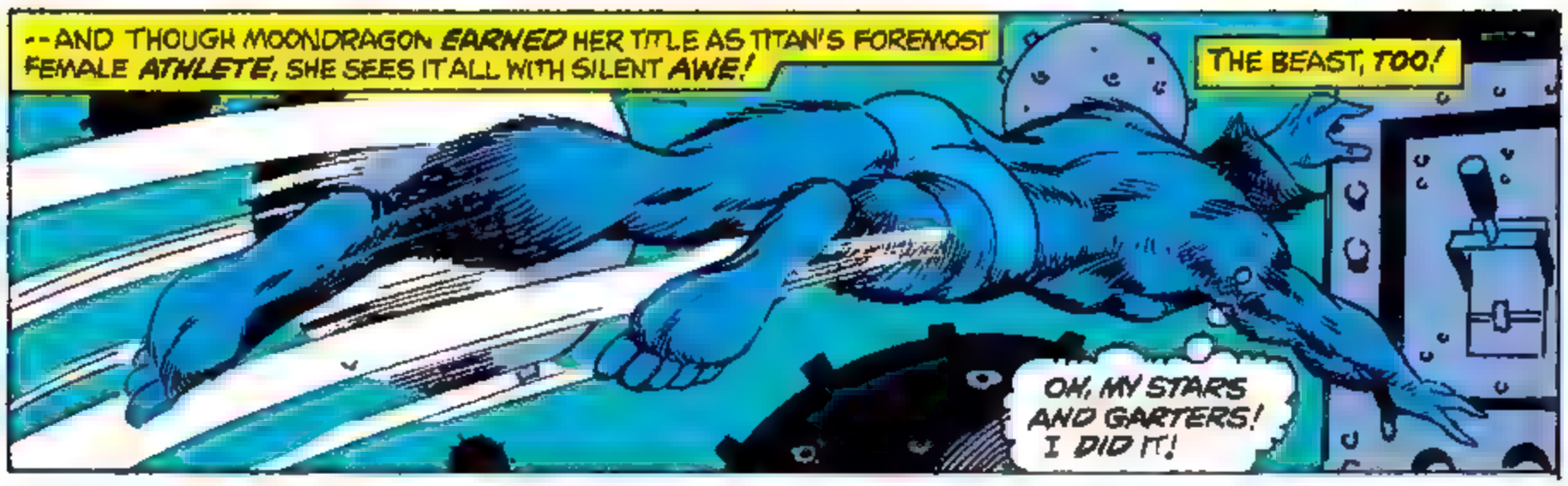
--THEN SUDDENLY LEAPS--

--AND DIVES--

--AND THROWS HIMSELF INTO A NEVER-ENDING SERIES OF TWISTS AND TURNS EXECUTED ALMOST AS FAST AS MOON-DRAGON'S TITAN-TRAINED SENSES CAN RECORD THEM!

HE CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN LAID BACK, BUT THERE IS NO HITCH IN THE SMOOTH RHYTHM OF HIS MOTION! NO UNCERTAINTY IN HIS CHOICE OF ROUTE!

HIS IS A NATURAL ABILITY, LITTLE AFFECTED BY DISUSE--


--AND THOUGH MOONDRAGON EARNED HER TITLE AS TITAN'S FOREMOST FEMALE ATHLETE, SHE SEES IT ALL WITH SILENT AWE!
THE BEAST, TOO!
OH, MY STARS AND GARTERS! I DID IT!

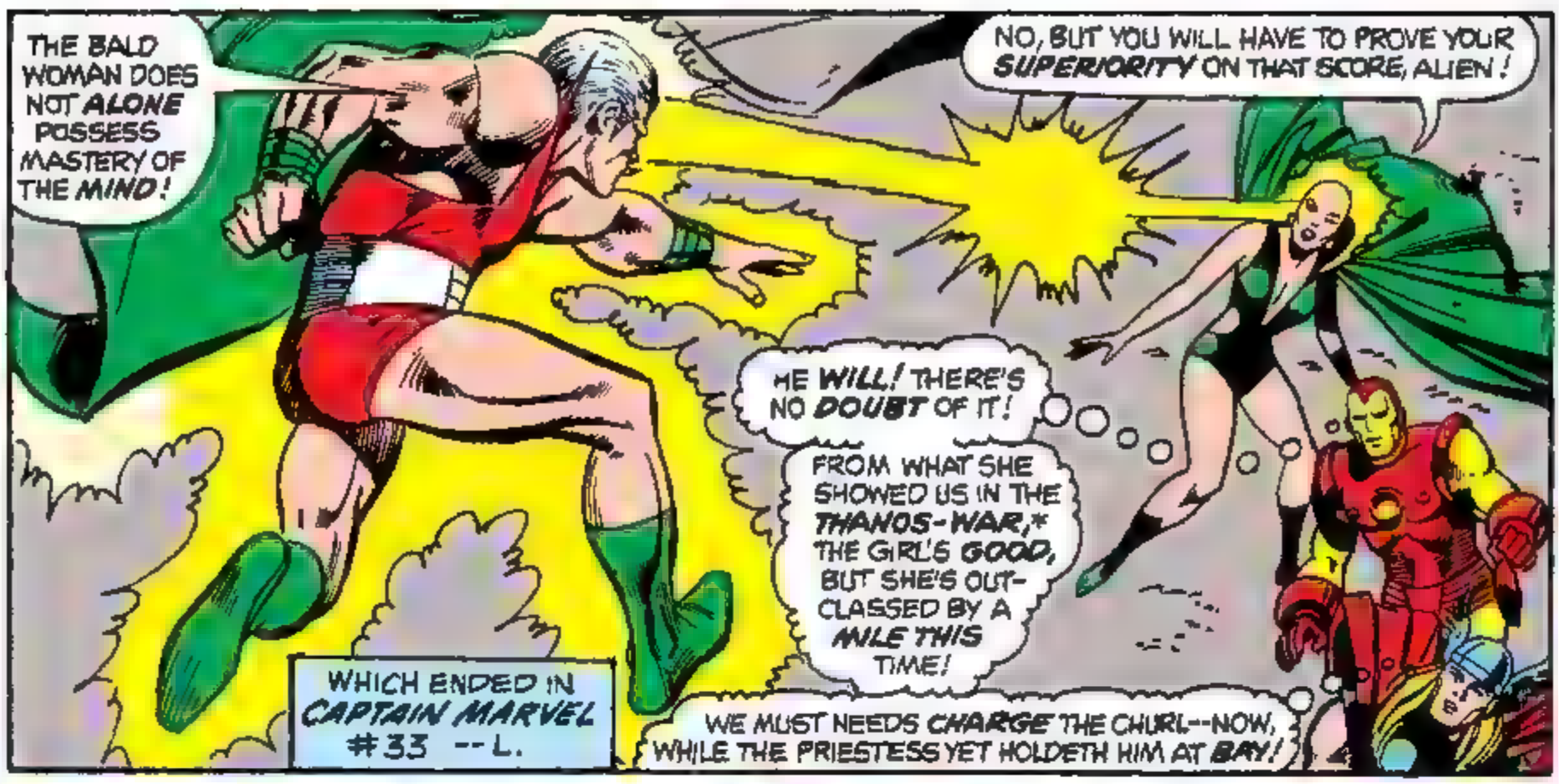
I THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE A TERMINAL CASE OF JELLIED KNEES--
--AFTER I TRIP THIS SWITCH!

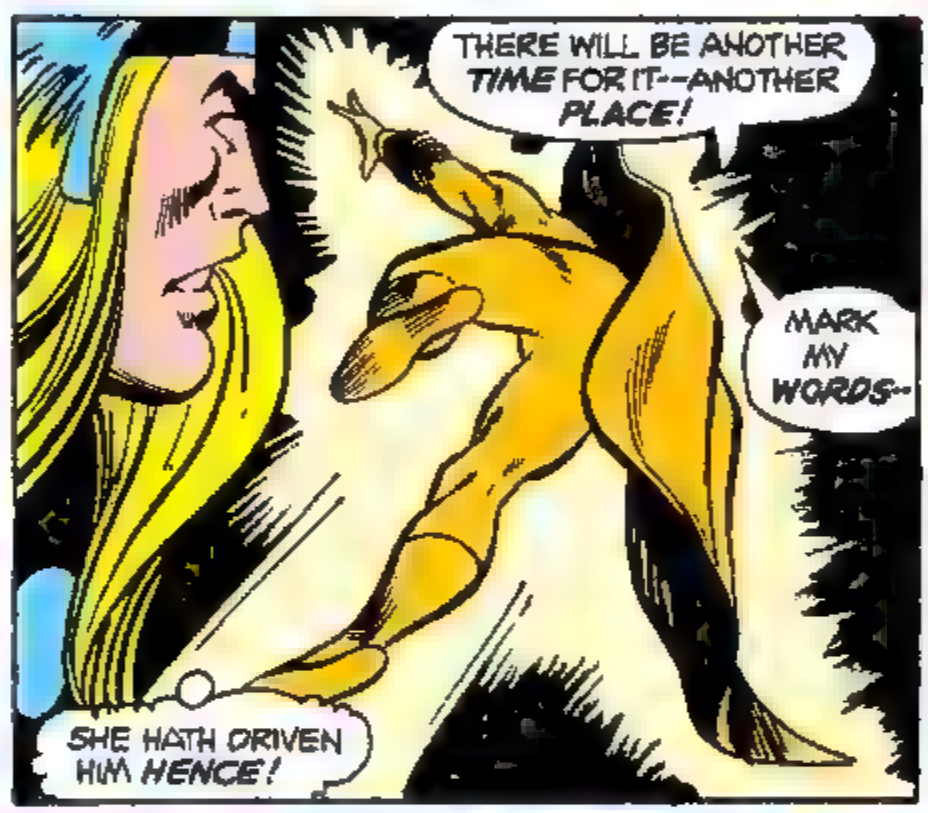
INSTANTLY, THE SINISTER SPHERES SHOOT SKYWARD...
...BUT HAS SAFETY COME TOO LATE?
UNNNGGH

IRON MAN'S ALIVE!
YEA, AND THOR AS WELL--
--DESPITE HIS UNDER-ESTIMATION OF THE FOE!

BUT JAN--JAN WON'T WAKE UP! I CAN BARELY FIND HER PULSE!
BLAST YOU, STRANGER! COME DOWN HERE AND FIGHT LIKE A MAN!

NOT LIKE A MAN, YELLOWJACKET--BUT LIKE THAT WHICH I AM TO MAN--
--A STRANGER!
MY GAME HAS OFFERED ME AMUSEMENT, BUT NOT THE ANTICIPATED PLEASURE OF THE AVENGERS' DEATHS--
--SO I APPEAR BEFORE YOU SOLELY TO RECTIFY MATTERS!





NEXT: WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THESE NEW AVENGERS? WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU. OH, AND BY THE WAY--

THINGS ARE SELDOM WHAT THEY SEEM!

AVENGERS MARVEL COMICS GROUP

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS

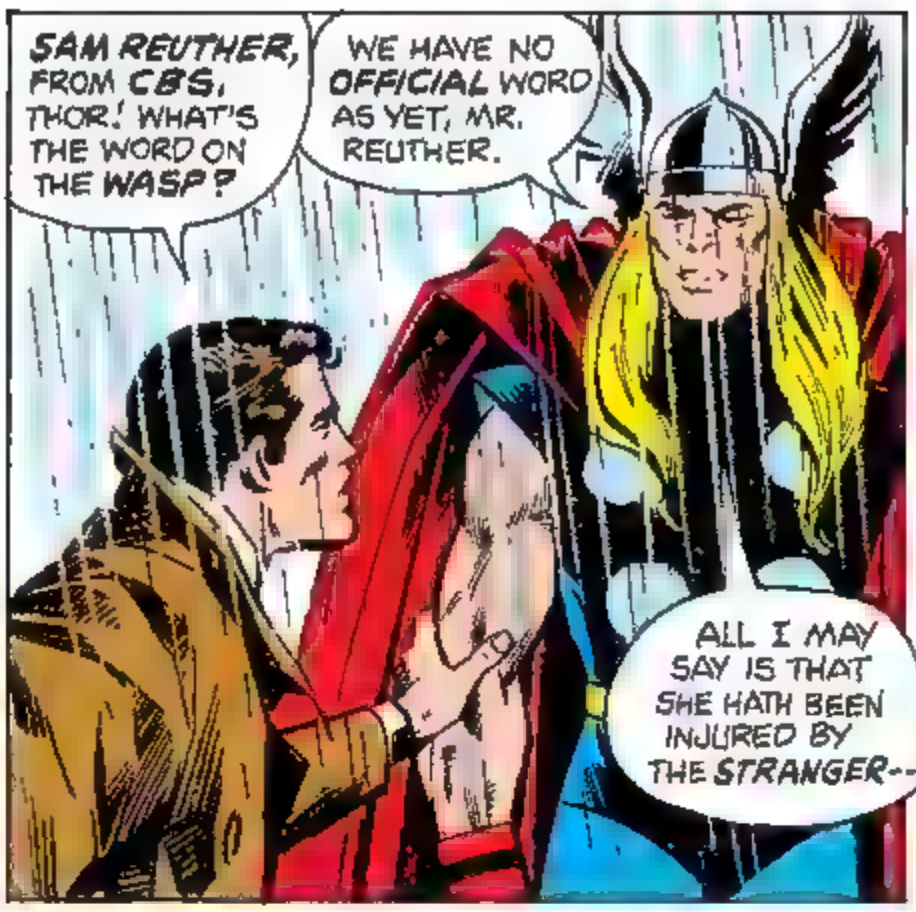
DIE, AVENGERS! YOU SHALL NOT LIVE TO LEARN MY FINAL SECRET!

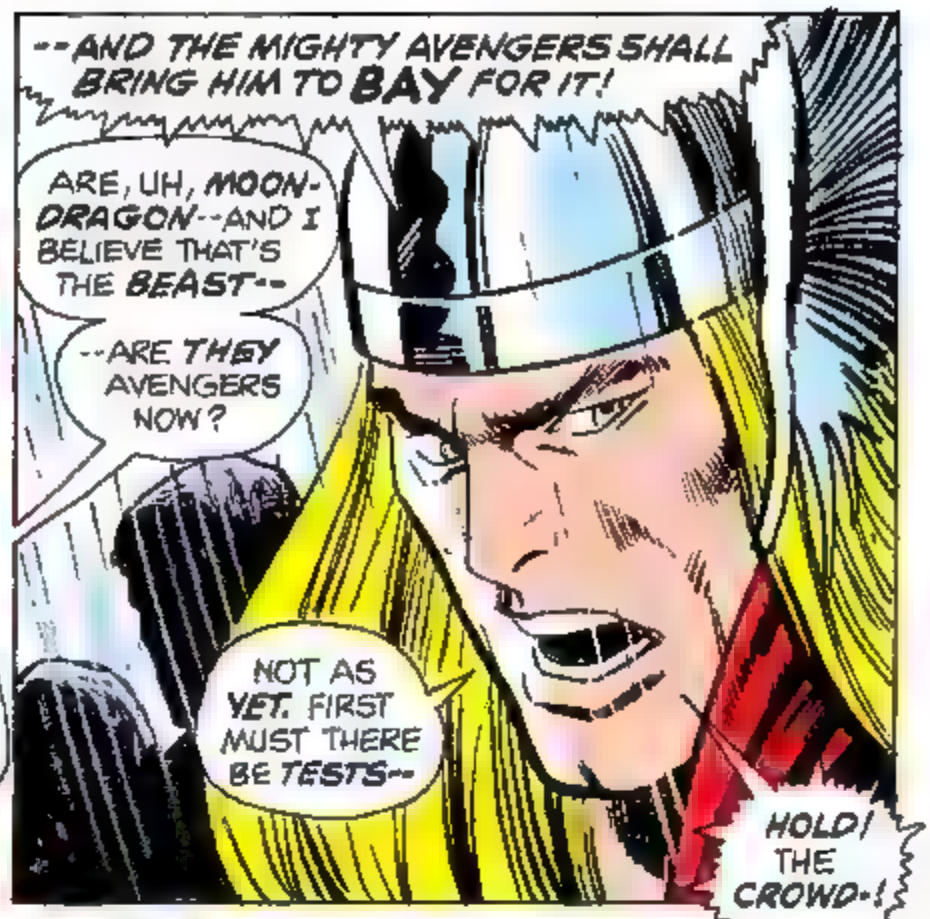
STRANGER IN A STRANGE MAN!

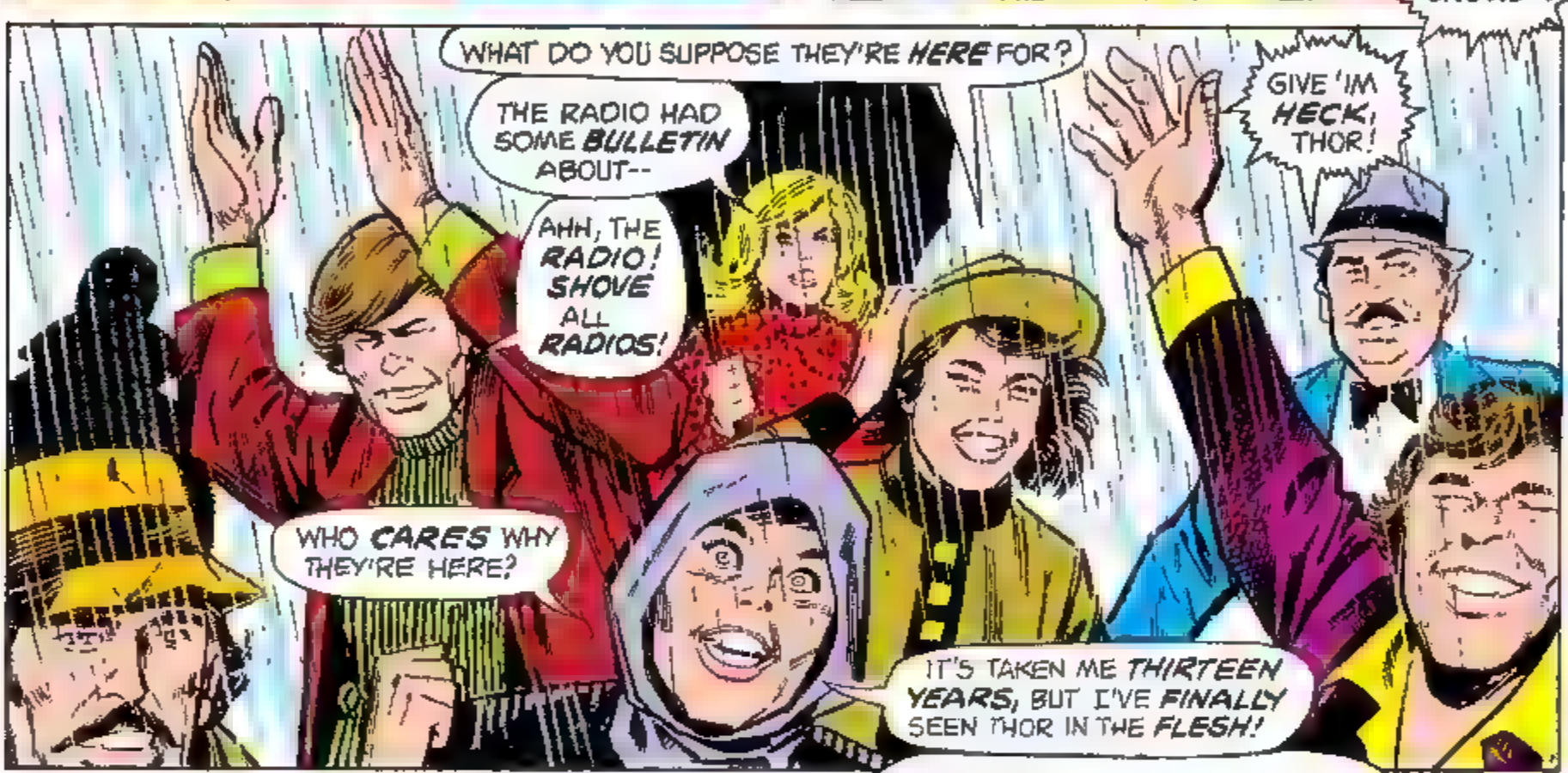
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!™

S. ENGLEHART STORY | GEORGE TUSKA PENCILS | VINNIE C. INKS | CHARLOTTE J., LETTERING G. ROUSSOS, COLORIST | LEN WEIN EDITOR


SAM REUTHER, FROM CBS, THOR! WHAT'S THE WORD ON THE WASP?
WE HAVE NO OFFICIAL WORD AS YET, MR. REUTHER.
ALL I MAY SAY IS THAT SHE HATH BEEN INJURED BY THE STRANGER--


--AND THE MIGHTY AVENGERS SHALL BRING HIM TO BAY FOR IT!
ARE, UH, MOON-DRAGON--AND I BELIEVE THAT'S THE BEAST--
--ARE THEY AVENGERS NOW?
NOT AS YET. FIRST MUST THERE BE TESTS--
HOLD! THE CROWD-!

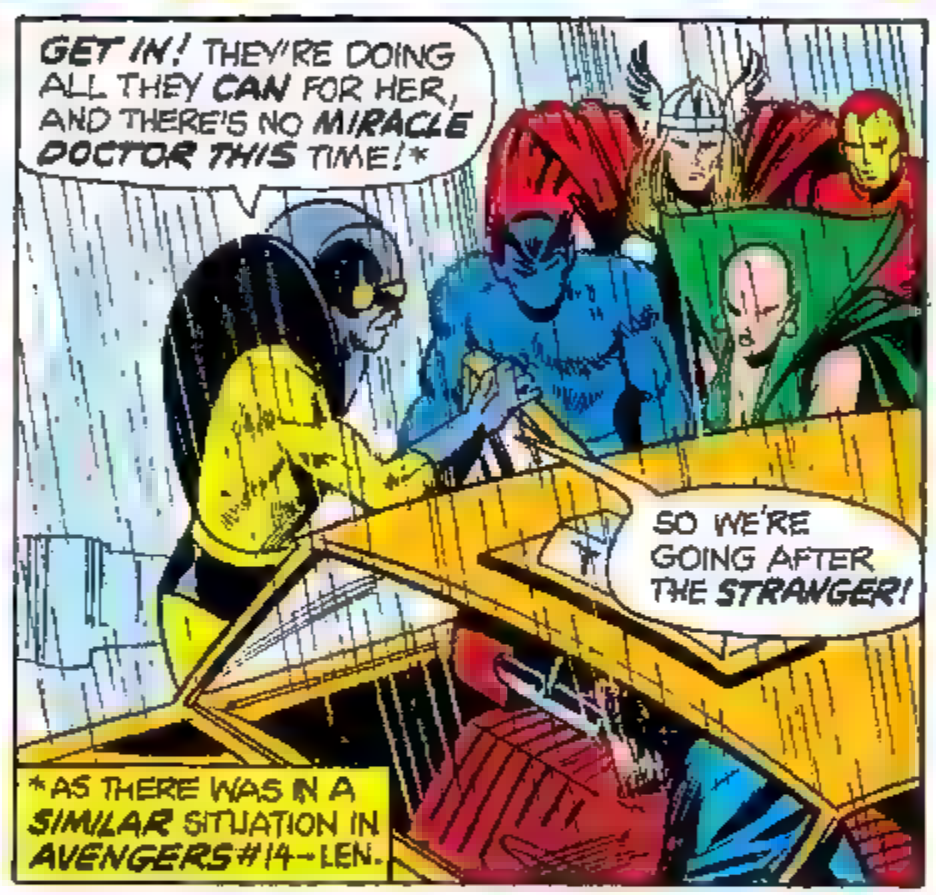

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'RE HERE FOR?
THE RADIO HAD SOME BULLETIN ABOUT--
AHH, THE RADIO! SHOVE ALL RADIOS!
GIVE 'IM HECK, THOR!
WHO CARES WHY THEY'RE HERE?
IT'S TAKEN ME THIRTEEN YEARS, BUT I'VE FINALLY SEEN THOR IN THE FLESH!

THAT BALD WOMAN GIVES ME THE CREEPS, BILLY.
AW, COOL IT, YA OLD WITCH! I WANNA KNOW WHO THOSE TWO FREAKS WITH 'EM ARE!
I DON'T COTTON TO THE GORILLA MYSELF, BITSY.
THAT'S NO GORILLA, FELLA.
THAT'S A MUTANT.
HEY, LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
"WHAT ABOUT THE CROWD," ASKS REUTHER OFF-HANDEDLY.
THOR SAYS NOTHING.

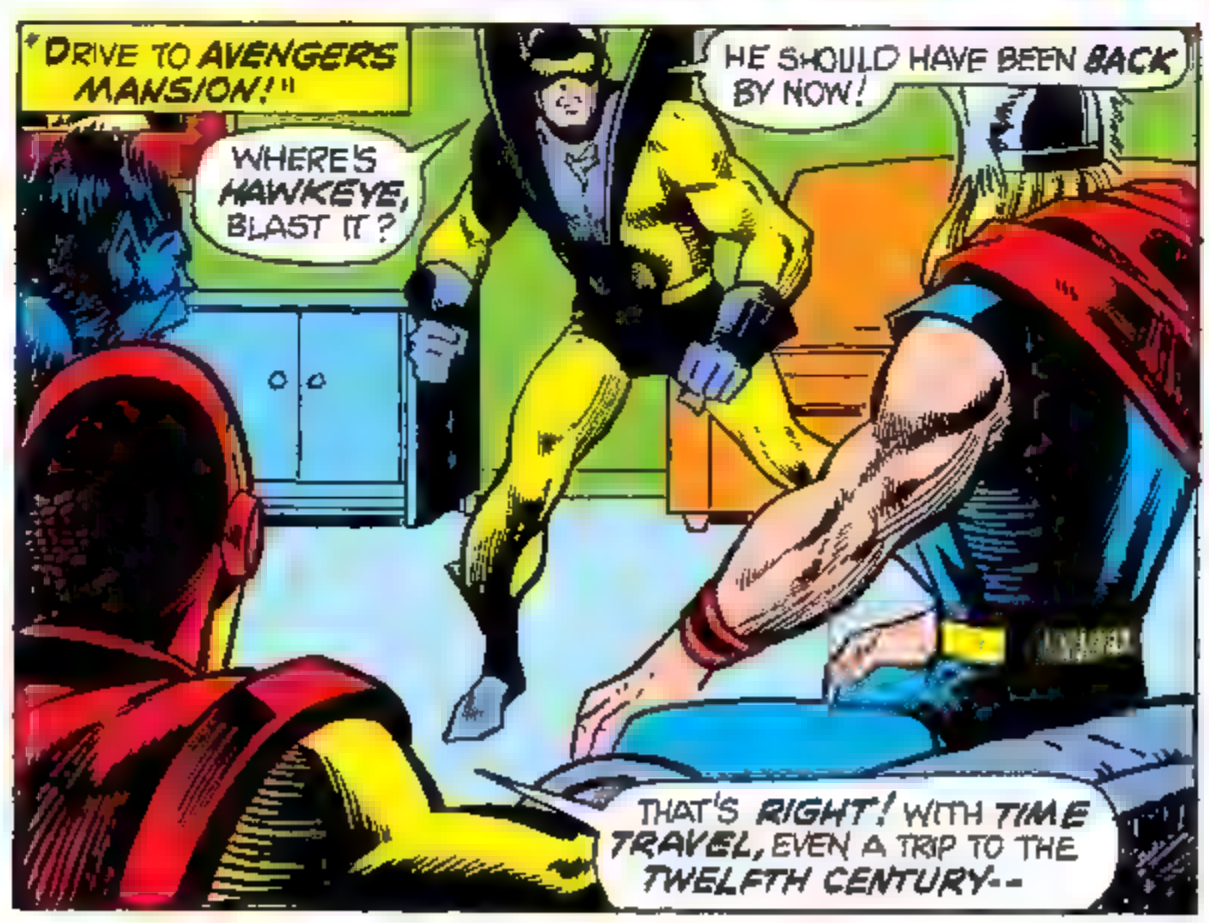
ALL AT ONCE--
LET'S GO, AVENGERS, RIGHT NOW! WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO!
EASY, YJ-- WE'RE READY AND WILLING!
HOW'S JAN?
JAN?

WHY, JAN'S IN CRITICAL CONDITION! THE ONLY REASON SHE'S NOT DEAD IS BECAUSE SHE WAS TINY AND IN MID-AIR WHEN THE STRANGER'S MINE BLEW! THE FIRST SHOCK WAVE HURLED HER AWAY FROM THE EPICENTER!
THAT WAY, MISSING MOST OF THE BLAST--

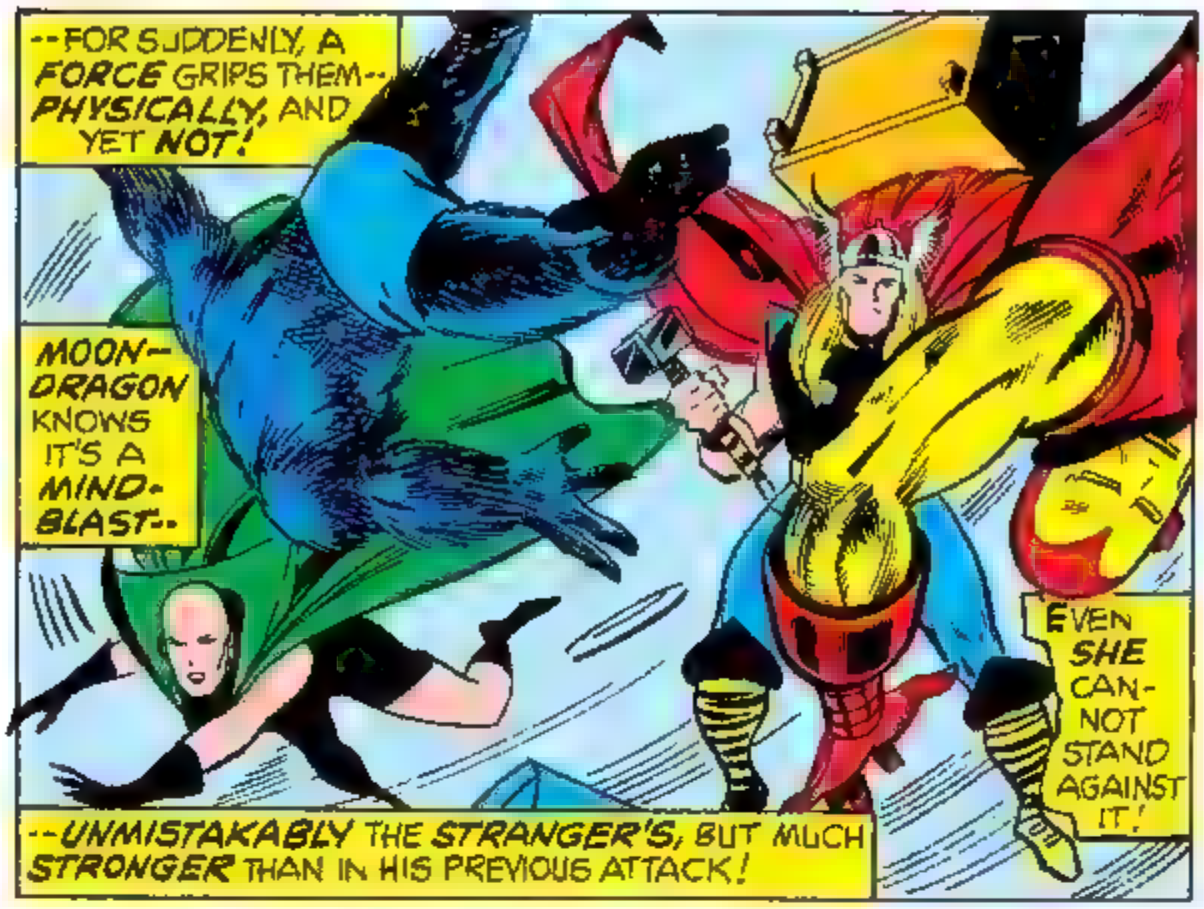
--SHE MAY NOT LAST TILL MORNING!
TAXI!
SKREEEE
HEY! ARE YOU NUTS?!

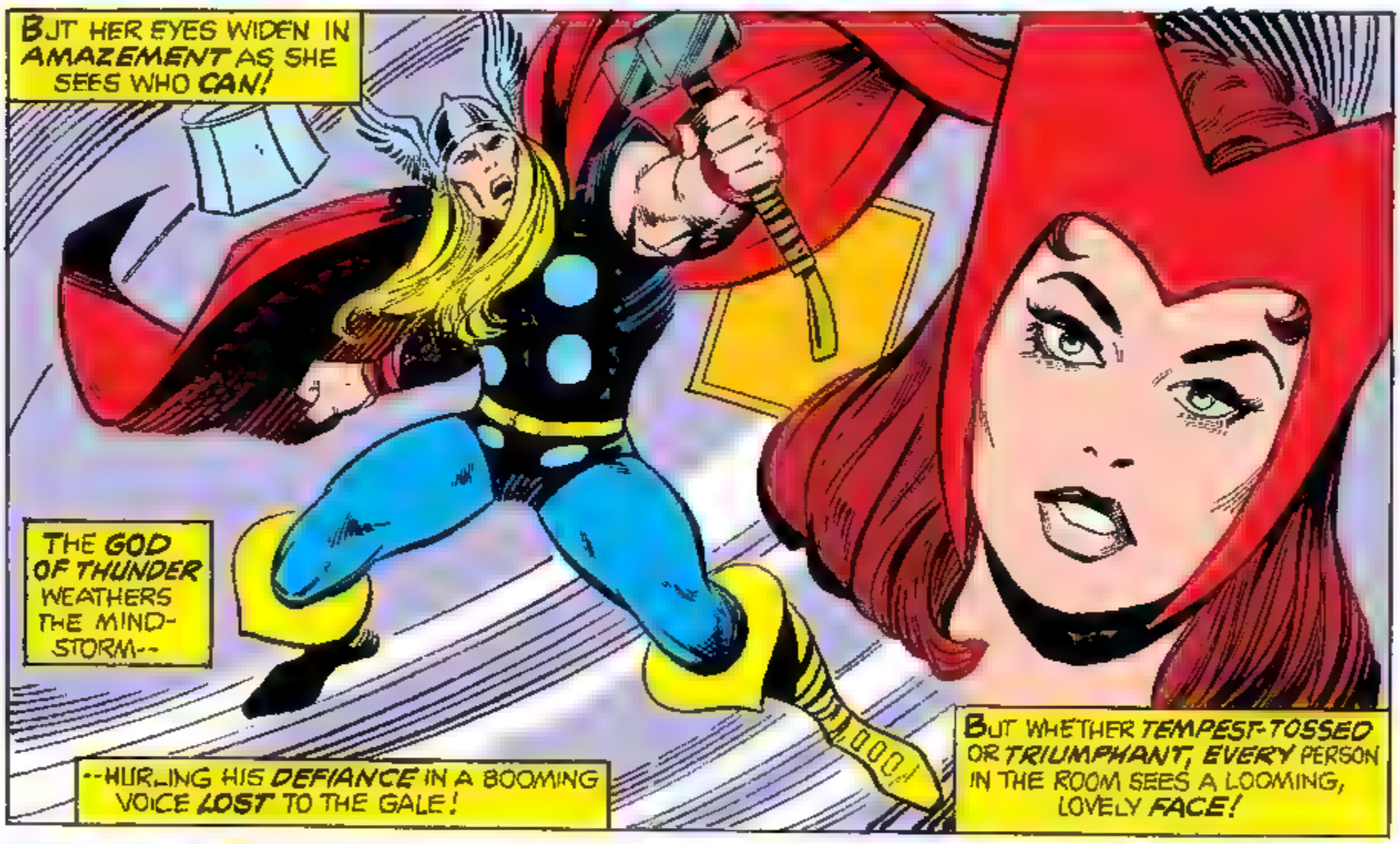

GET IN! THEY'RE DOING ALL THEY CAN FOR HER, AND THERE'S NO MIRACLE DOCTOR THIS TIME!*
SO WE'RE GOING AFTER THE STRANGER!
*AS THERE WAS IN A SIMILAR SITUATION IN AVENGERS #14--LEN.

LOOK, THIS HACK AIN'T LICENSED FOR FIVE PASSENGERS!
WE DIDN'T BRING OUR QUINJET, MISTER, AND OUR FLY-GUYS NEED A REST--
--SO JUST DRIVE!


"DRIVE TO AVENGERS MANSION!"
WHERE'S HAWKEYE, BLAST IT?
HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN BACK BY NOW!
THAT'S RIGHT! WITH TIME TRAVEL, EVEN A TRIP TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY--

--COULD END UP BACK AT THE TIME IT BEGAN! EVEN IF THE BLACK KNIGHT GOT HIM INVOLVED IN SOMETHING, HE SHOULDN'T STILL BE GONE!
I'M WORRIED! THAT HOT-HEAD--
IRON MAN'S NEXT WORDS ARE NEVER SPOKEN...


--FOR SUDDENLY, A FORCE GRIPS THEM-- PHYSICALLY, AND YET NOT!
MOON-DRAGON KNOWS IT'S A MIND-BLAST--
EVEN SHE CAN-NOT STAND AGAINST IT!
--UNMISTAKABLY THE STRANGER'S, BUT MUCH STRONGER THAN IN HIS PREVIOUS ATTACK!


BUT HER EYES WIDEN IN AMAZEMENT AS SHE SEES WHO CAN!
THE GOD OF THUNDER WEATHERS THE MIND-STORM--
--HURLING HIS DEFIANCE IN A BOOMING VOICE LOST TO THE GALE!
BUT WHETHER TEMPEST-TOSSED OR TRIUMPHANT, EVERY PERSON IN THE ROOM SEES A LOOMING, LOVELY FACE!

WANDA! THE STRANGER DID SEEK OUT OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HER LOCATION!
YOU BETCHUM, RED RYDER! AND AFTER WHAT HE TRIED WITH US, WE KNOW WHY!
YOU'D BETTER GET ON THE HORN TO WANDA AND THE VISION, PRONTO!
THAT'S JUST IT, BEAST! HE DIDN'T FIND OUT FROM US--
--BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW!

OF COURSE! THEY'RE ON THEIR...HONEYMOON!

BUT THAT MEANS HE'S STILL LOOKING FOR THEM--

--AND WE CAN USE THAT AGAINST HIM!

A DECOY, YOU THINK? TAKE OFF LIKE WE WERE GOING TO WARN THEM--?

EXACTLY! AND WHEN HE SHOWS UP TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK...

...NO, ON SECOND THOUGHT, IT WON'T WASH. WHAT IF HE DOESN'T SHOW, AND JUST USES ANOTHER MIND-BLAST?

THEN SOME OF US COULD TRACK HIS POWER TO ITS SOURCE, HENRY!

'TIS A SOUND PLAN AFTER ALL, METHINKS!

SURE! MOONDRAGON AND I CAN TAKE THE POINT!

NAY, OLD FRIEND. THOU ART NEEDED HERE, TO OPERATE ANTHONY STARK'S DEVICES.

I SHALL ENTER THE LION'S DEN... WITH MOON-DRAGON.

NOW WAIT A MINUTE--!

THOU HAST BEEN TOO LONG WITH THINE EMPLOYER, IRON MAN. THOU DOST LOVE THE LADIES NEAR AS MUCH AS HE!*

IN ADDITION, THE AVENGERS' TWO STRONGEST MEMBERS SHOULD EACH LEAD A GROUPING.

MAYBE SO-- BUT WHY DOES MOONDRAGON GO WITH YOUR GROUP?

* THOR KNOWS HIS FRIEND'S SECRET IDENTITY.--L.

THOR'S SMILE WIDENS, "BECAUSE I BE AVENGERS' CHAIRMAN...

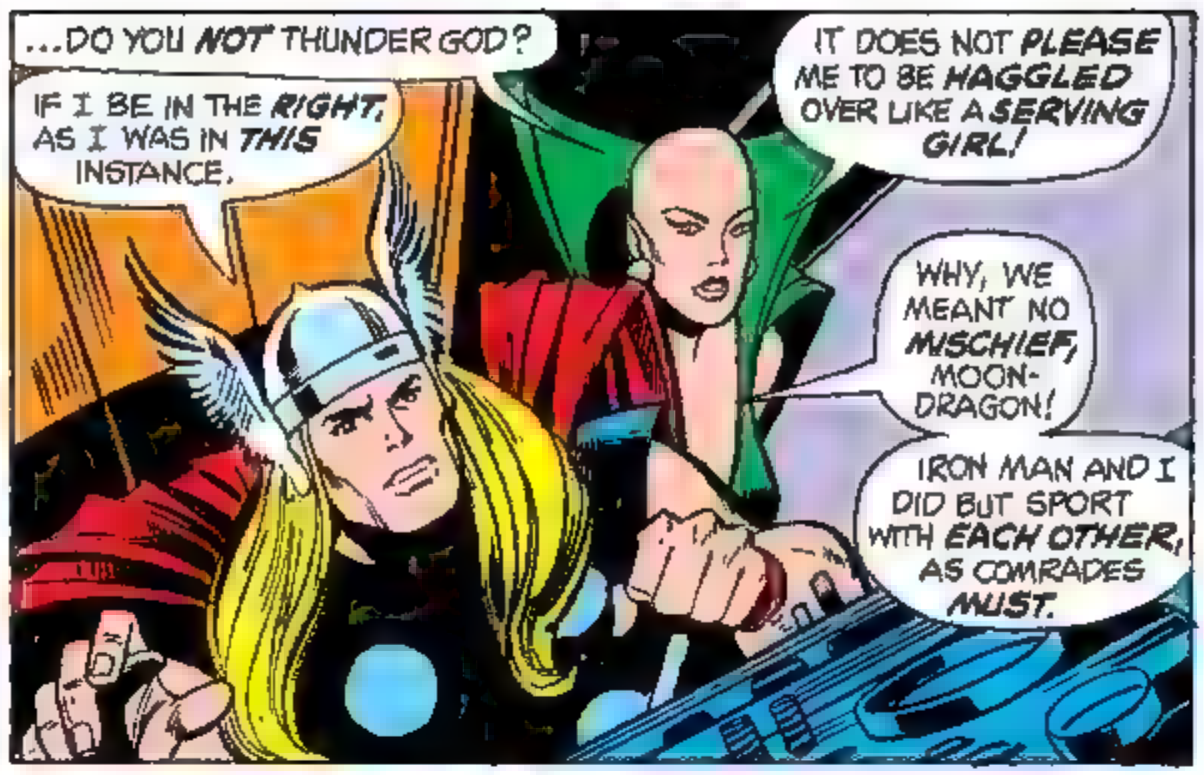
"...AND 'TIS MY JUDGMENT THAT SHE BE BETTER SUITED FOR THIS BATTLE THAN THE BEAST.

"IF THE STRANGER ACTUALLY CONFRONTS YOU," MUTTERS YELLOWJACKET, "I THINK I'LL STAY WITH IRON MAN AT THE TRACKING MACHINE."

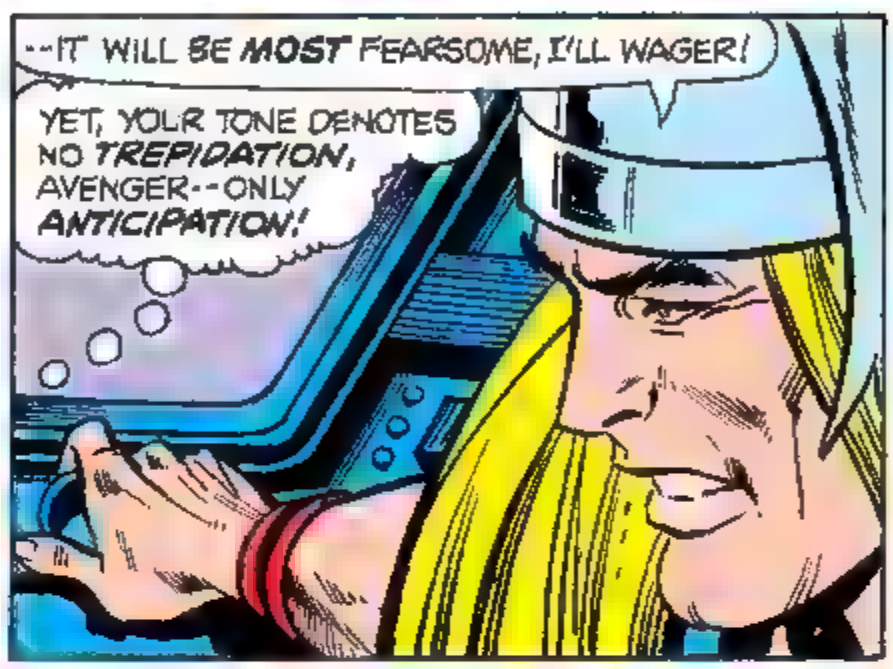
"RIGHT ON!" RUMBLES IRON MAN. "HE KNOWS WHERE THE ACTION'S GOING TO BE.

"FIE ON'T!" GROWLS THOR...AND SO IT GOES...

...UNTIL...
VROOM!
YOU ALWAYS HAVE YOUR WAY...


...DO YOU NOT THUNDER GOD?
IF I BE IN THE RIGHT, AS I WAS IN THIS INSTANCE.
IT DOES NOT PLEASE ME TO BE HAGGLED OVER LIKE A SERVING GIRL!
WHY, WE MEANT NO MISCHIEF, MOON-DRAGON!
IRON MAN AND I DID BUT SPORT WITH EACH OTHER, AS COMRADES MUST.

FEAR NOT, WOMAN: THOR DOTH LOOK UPON THEE SOLELY AS AN ALLY--
I STRIVE TO AVOID FEAR AT ALL TIMES, THOR.
--ALBEIT A COMELY ONE!
GOOD, FOR WHATE'ER MAY BEFALL THIS DAY--


--IT WILL BE MOST FEARSOME, I'LL WAGER!
YET, YOUR TONE DENOTES NO TREPIDATION, AVENGER--ONLY ANTICIPATION!

FASCINATING...THE THUNDER GOD TO A WARRIOR RACE!
HE IS NOTHING LIKE THE DEM-GODS OF TITAN* I'VE LEFT BEHIND FOR EARTH.
I DO NOT BELIEVE I SHALL LIKE THIS AVENGER.
* OF CAPTAIN MARVEL AND--SOON--WARLOCK FAME.--L

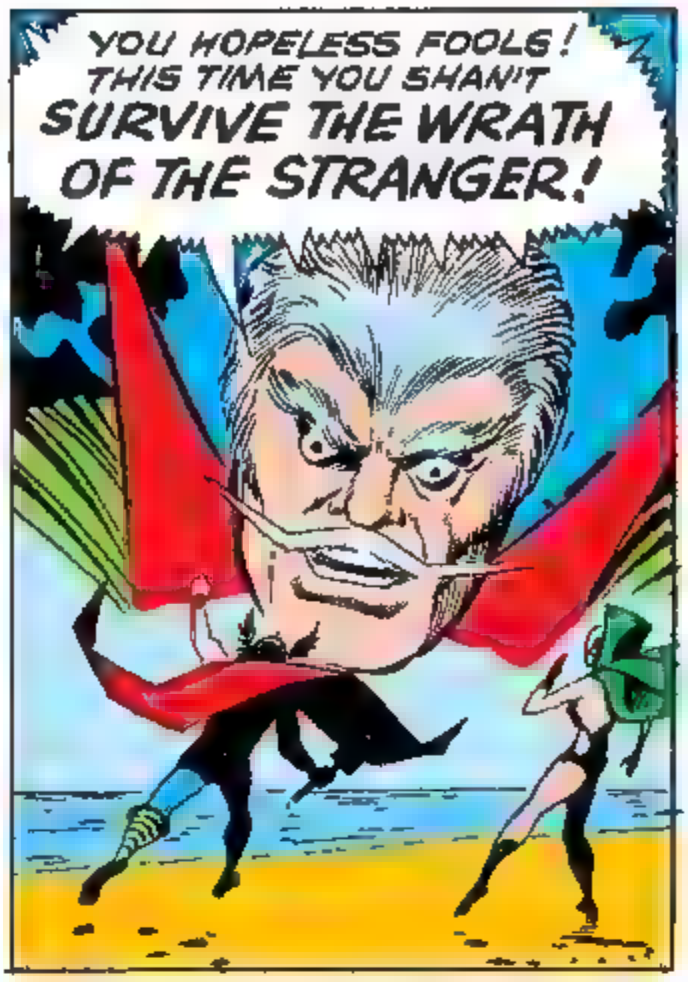
MANY ARE THE THOUGHTS OF THOR AT THIS MOMENT--
--HOPE I DID THE RIGHT THING, LETTING HIM GO WITHOUT ME!
WELL, IF YOU DIDN'T, IT'S TOO LATE NOW!
RELAX, HANK! IT'S ALL UP TO FATE FROM HERE ON IN.
BLAST IT!

EASY, MISTER! I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET, BUT DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ME!
THAT'S WHAT HAS ME WORRIED!

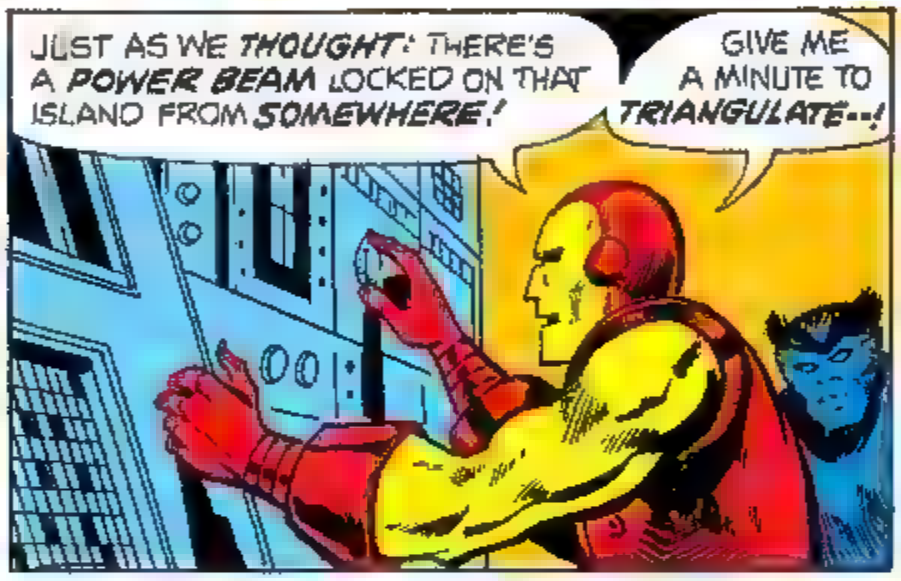
WOW! THESE GUYS PLAY A LOT GRANDER GAME THAN THE X-MEN EVER DID! THEY'VE GOT SO MUCH POWER--
...FOR A BEAST.
--AND THEY'VE BEEN IN HIGH GEAR EVER SINCE I MET THEM! I HOPE THERE'S ROOM AMONGST THE SUPER-STARS...

DAWN, OVER THE FLORIDA KEYS.
THE AUTHORITIES SAY THAT THIS ISLAND IS DESERTED!
IT DOTH SEEM A LIKELY LAIR FOR A HONEYMOON, HOWEVER--

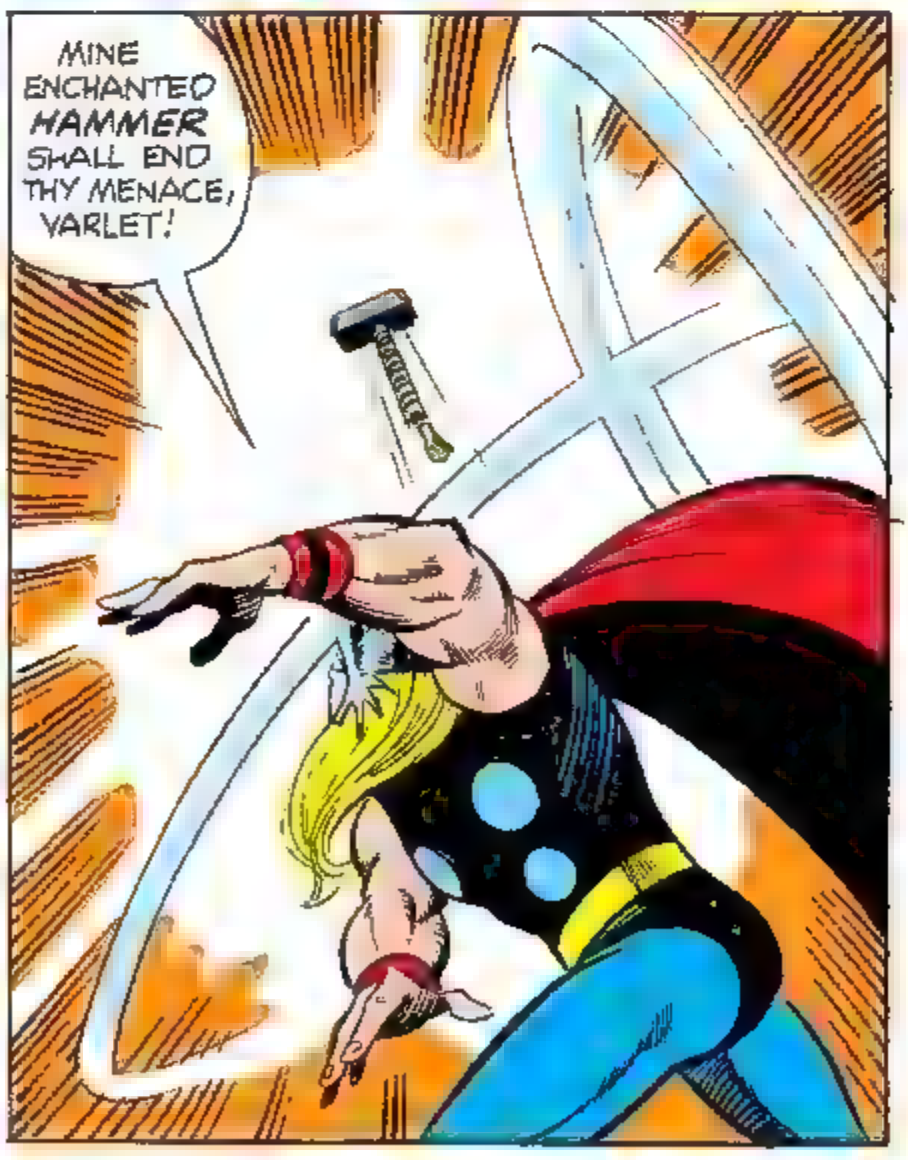
--SO OUR BAIT SHOULD ATTRACT THE SPIDER, WHILE ENDANGERING NO ONE.
EXCEPT OURSELVES.
BUT WAIT! I FEEL--
ANOTHER ATTACK MOUNTING! YES!


YOU HOPELESS FOOLS! THIS TIME YOU SHAN'T SURVIVE THE WRATH OF THE STRANGER!

BINGO!
THERE'S THE SIGNAL!

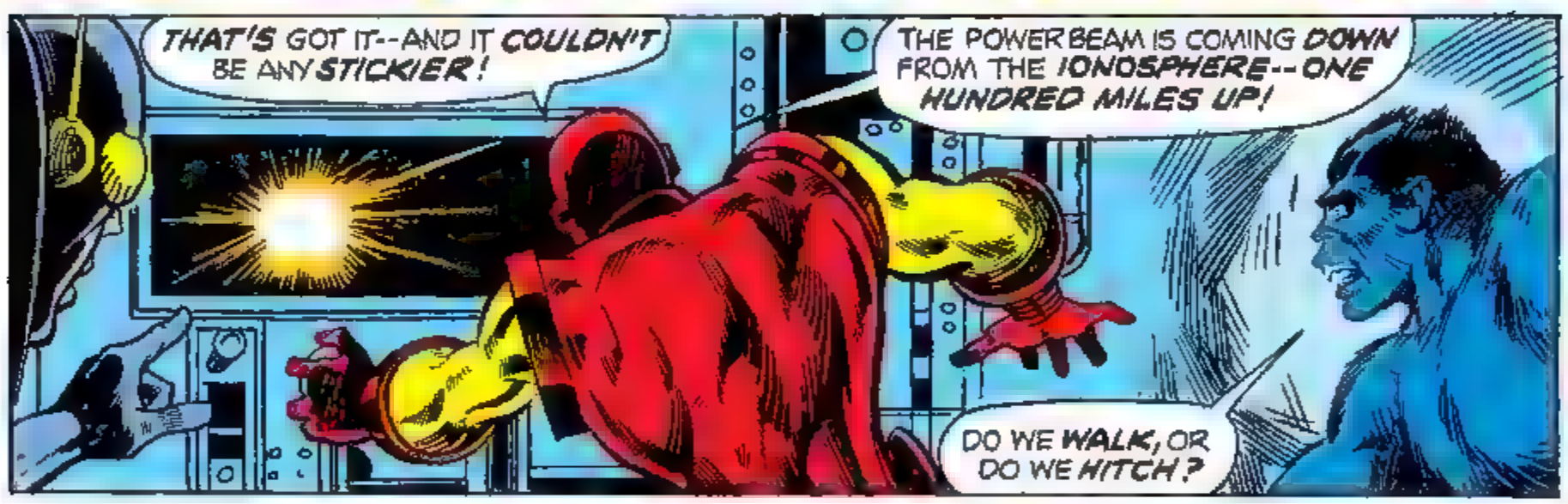

JUST AS WE THOUGHT: THERE'S A POWER BEAM LOCKED ON THAT ISLAND FROM SOMEWHERE!
GIVE ME A MINUTE TO TRIANGULATE--!

ALL THE AVENGERS SHALL FALL BEFORE ME--FIRST YOU TWO, THEN THE SCARLET WITCH AND THE VISION!
WE SAY THEE NAY!

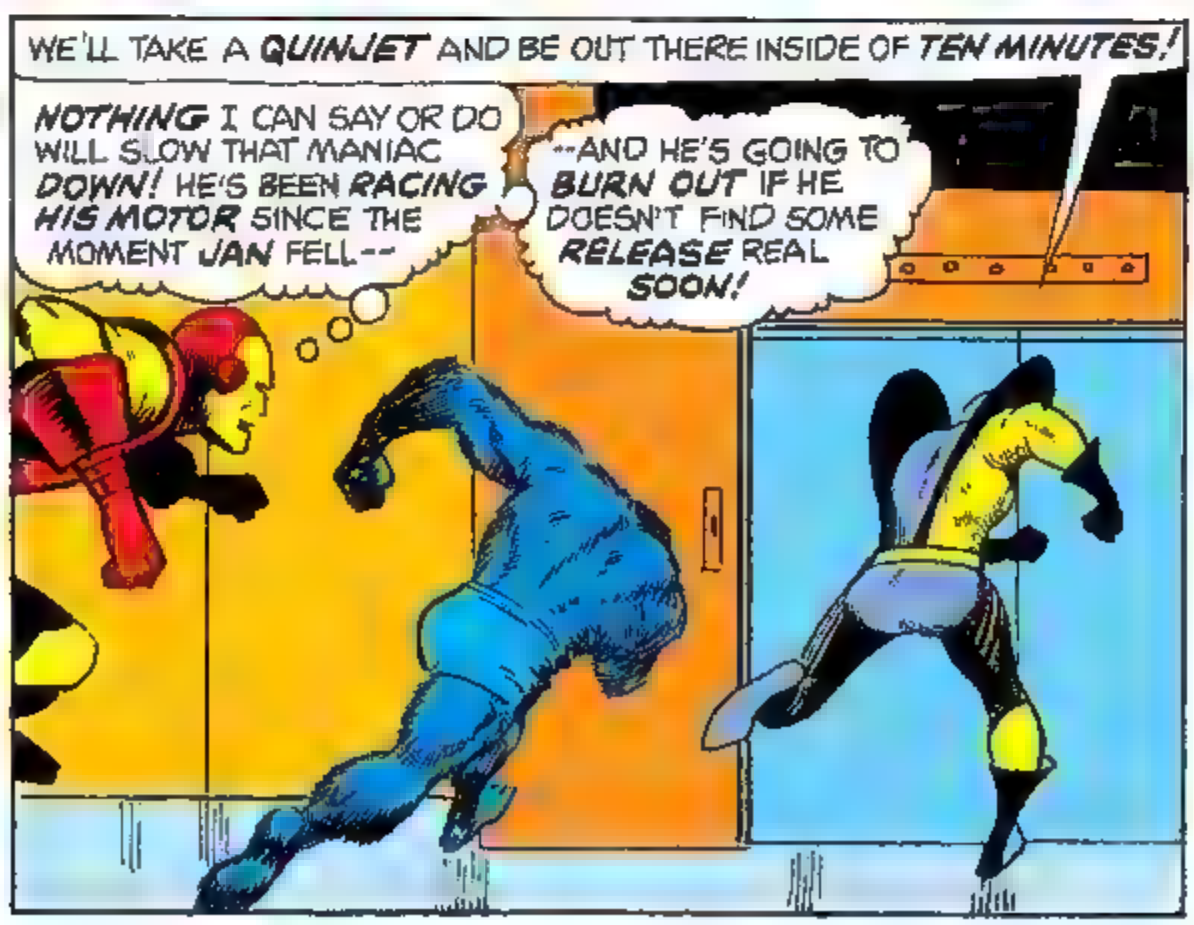

MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER SHALL END THY MENACE, VARLET!

FOOL! IN ORDER TO INJURE THE STRANGER--
--YOU MUST FIRST FIND ME!
HOW CAN YOU TELL THE REAL FROM THE REPLICA?
THOU HAST ATTEMPTED TO AMAZE ME THUS BEFORE, VILLAIN!*
* IN THOR #178.--L.

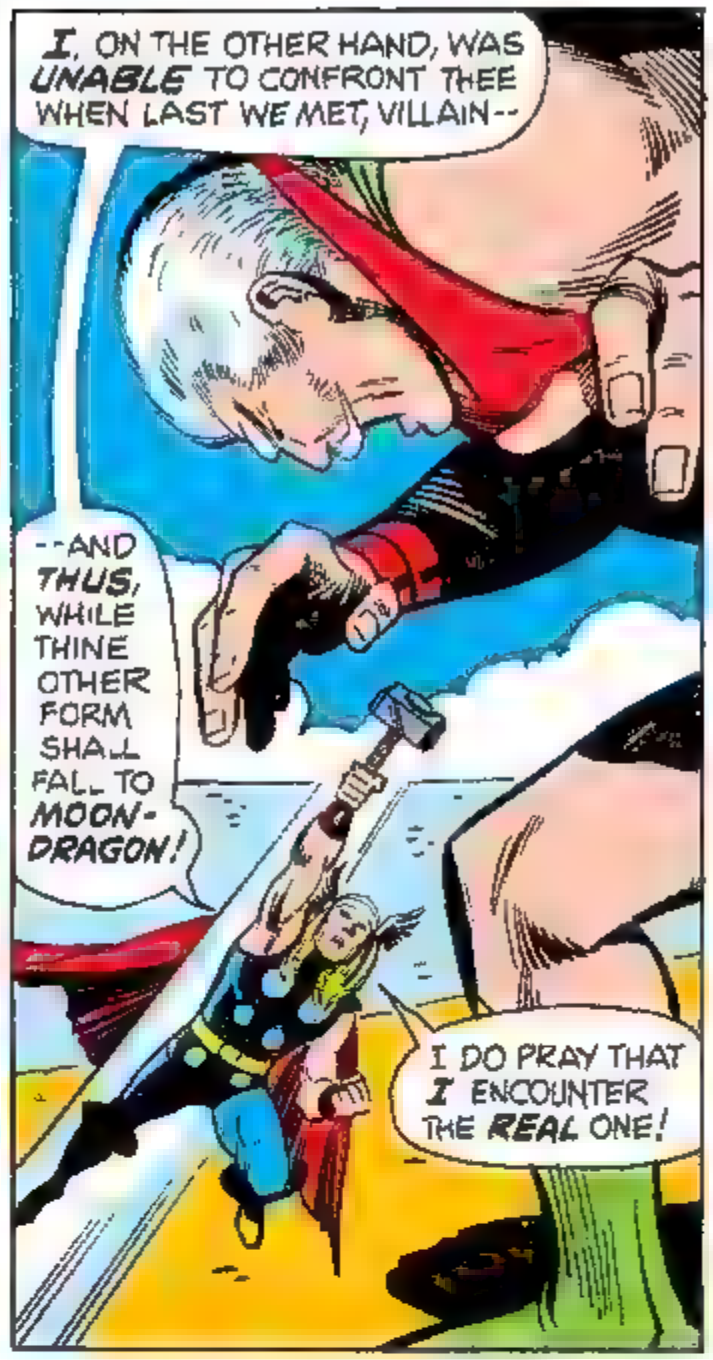
BUT DO YOU NOT FIND IT CURIOUS THAT HE HAS NOT ATTEMPTED A MIND-BLAST NOW, AVENGER?
LET US SEE WHAT IS REAL HERE!

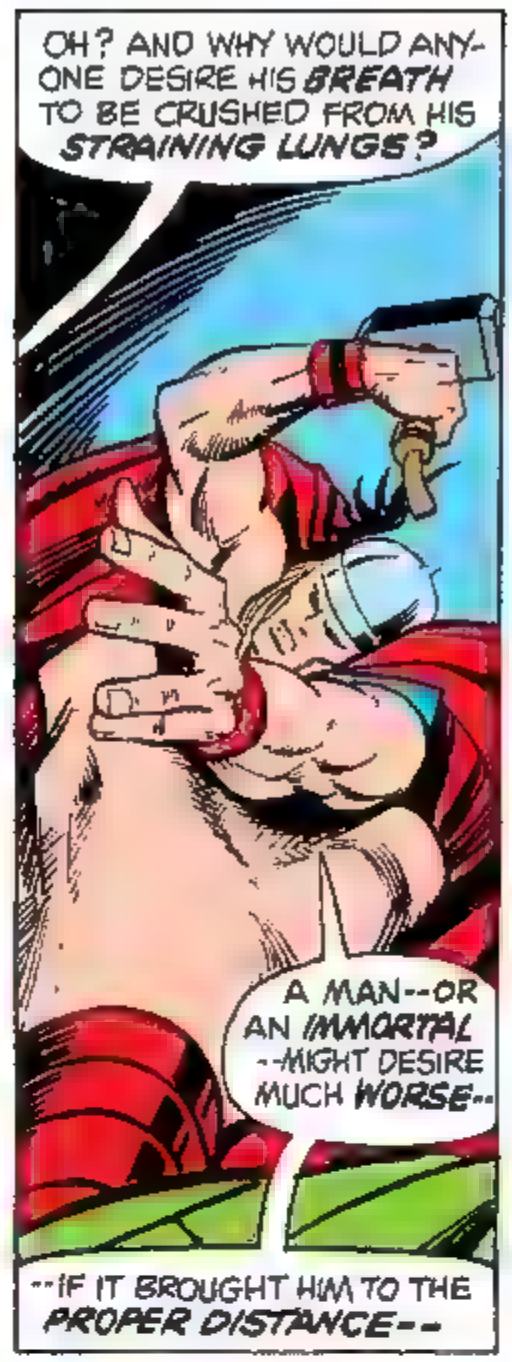

THAT'S GOT IT--AND IT COULDN'T BE ANY STICKIER!
THE POWER BEAM IS COMING DOWN FROM THE IONOSPHERE--ONE HUNDRED MILES UP!
DO WE WALK, OR DO WE HITCH?

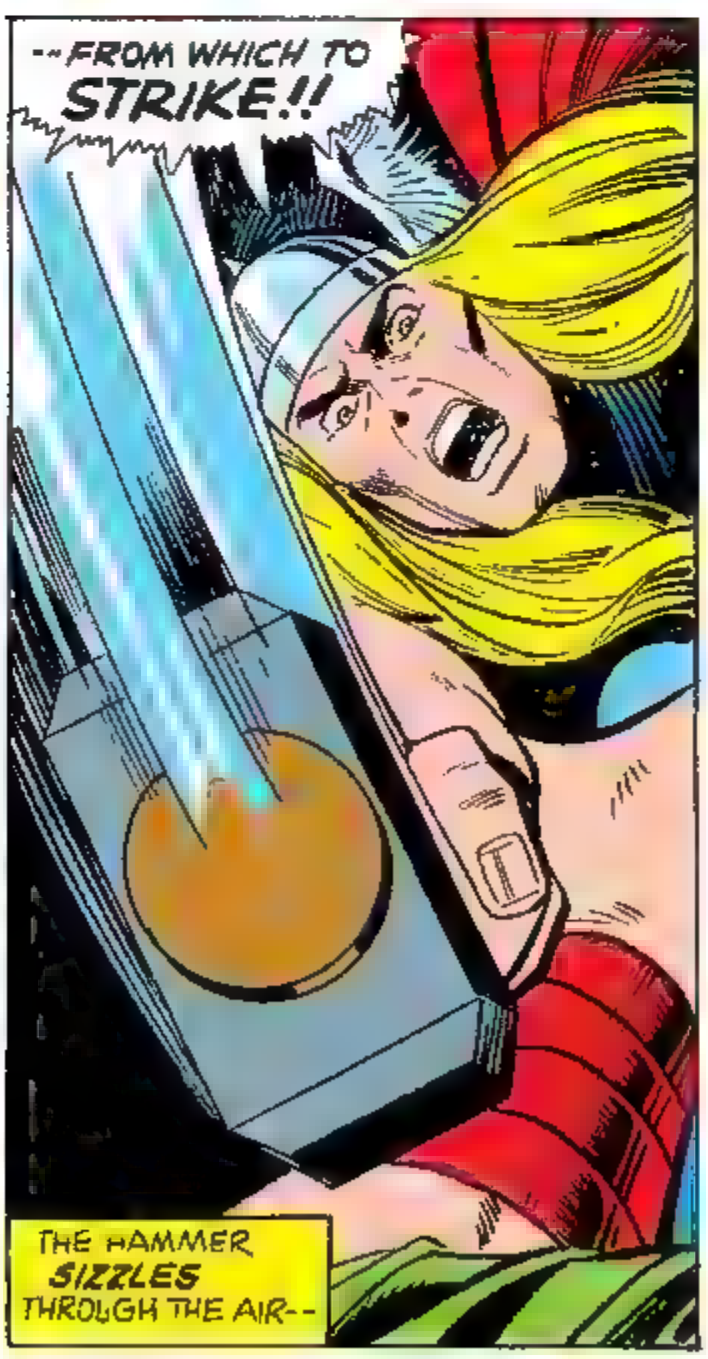
THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKES, BEAST!
HEAD FOR THE ROOF!

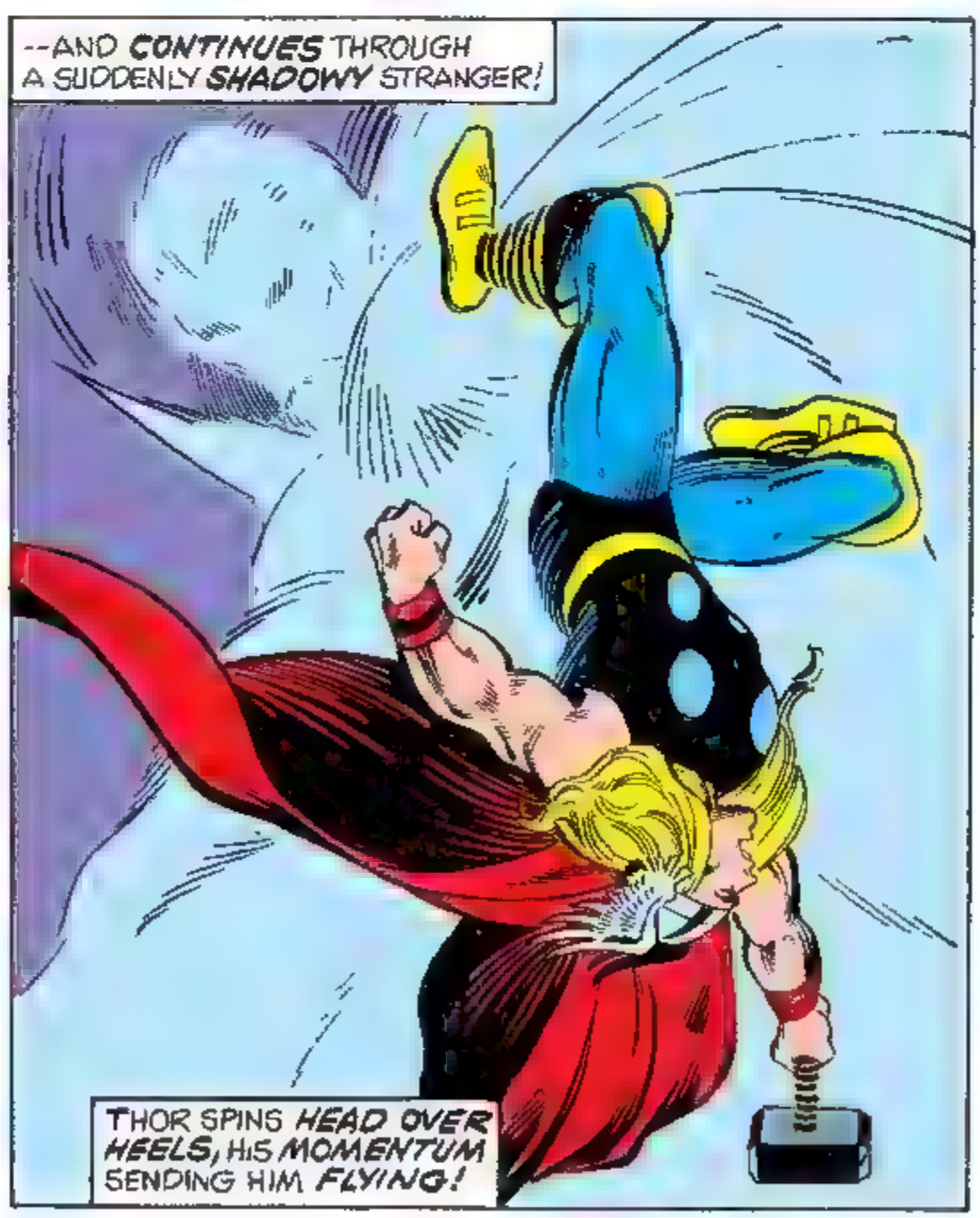

WE'LL TAKE A QUINJET AND BE OUT THERE INSIDE OF TEN MINUTES!
NOTHING I CAN SAY OR DO WILL SLOW THAT MANIAC DOWN! HE'S BEEN RACING HIS MOTOR SINCE THE MOMENT JAN FELL--
--AND HE'S GOING TO BURN OUT IF HE DOESN'T FIND SOME RELEASE REAL SOON!

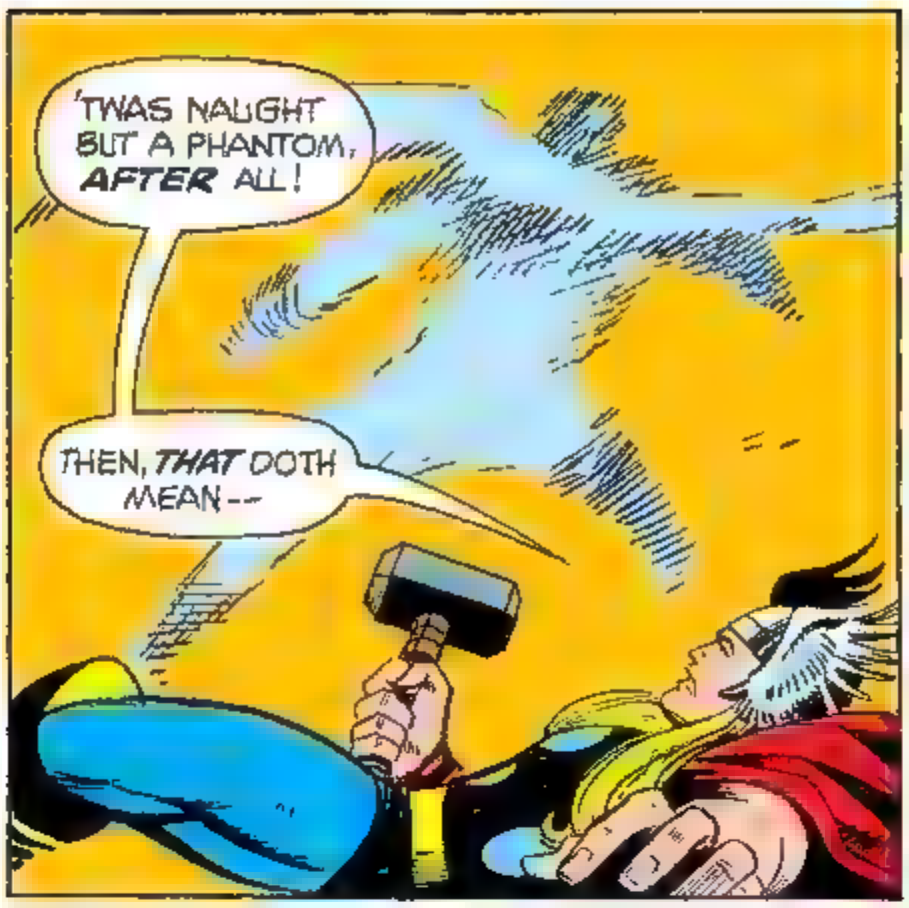
IT WAS YOU WHO DROVE ME AWAY LAST NIGHT, WOMAN!
I EXPECT TO DO SO AGAIN, THEN--
--AND MY INSTRUCTORS ENTITLED ME, MOONDRAGON!

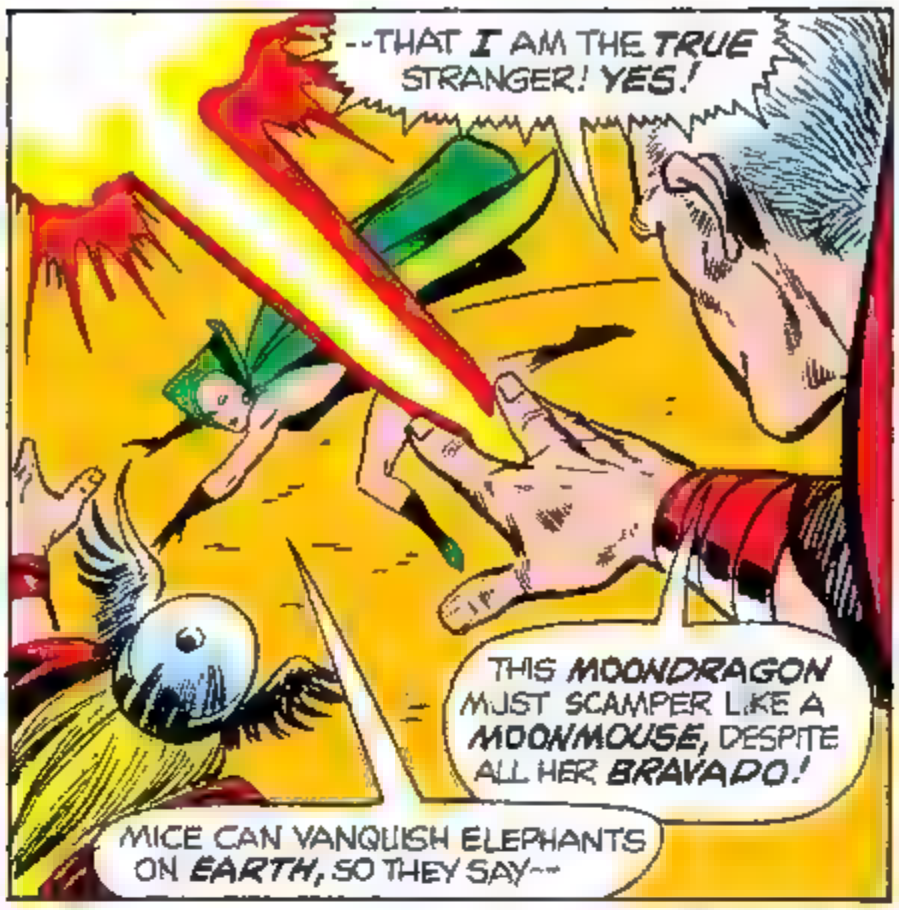

I, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS UNABLE TO CONFRONT THEE WHEN LAST WE MET, VILLAIN--
--AND THUS, WHILE THINE OTHER FORM SHALL FALL TO MOON-DRAGON!
I DO PRAY THAT I ENCOUNTER THE REAL ONE!

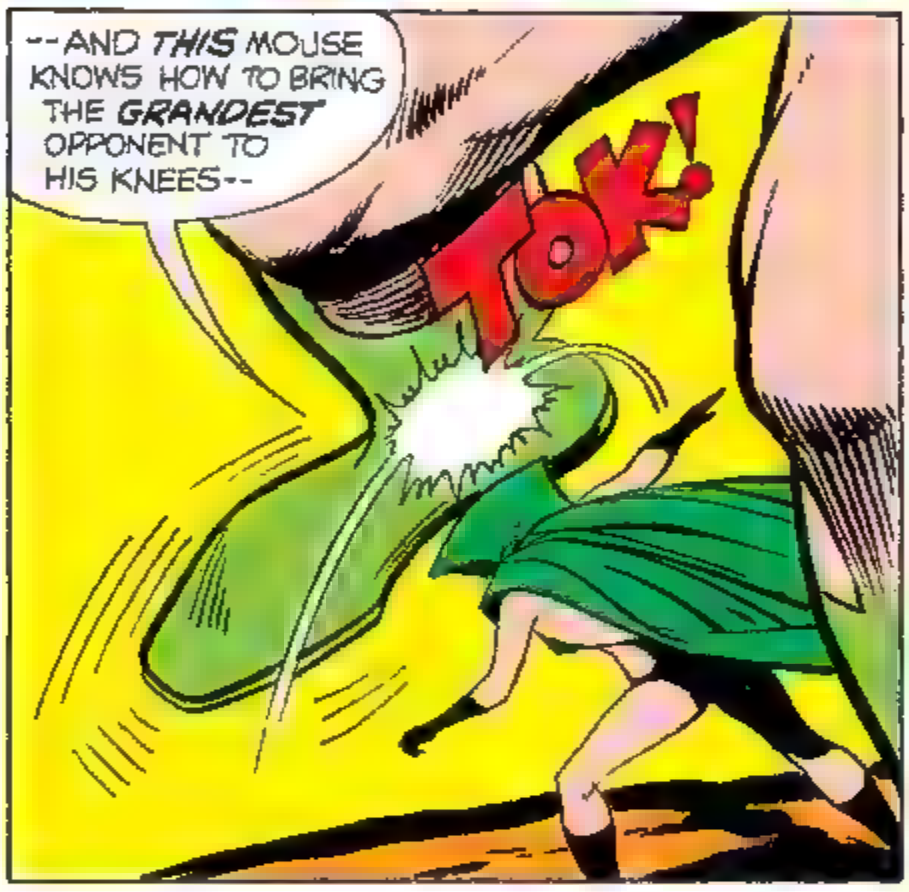

OH? AND WHY WOULD ANY-ONE DESIRE HIS BREATH TO BE CRUSHED FROM HIS STRAINING LUNGS?
A MAN--OR AN IMMORTAL --MIGHT DESIRE MUCH WORSE--
--IF IT BROUGHT HIM TO THE PROPER DISTANCE--


--FROM WHICH TO STRIKE!!
THE HAMMER SIZZLES THROUGH THE AIR--

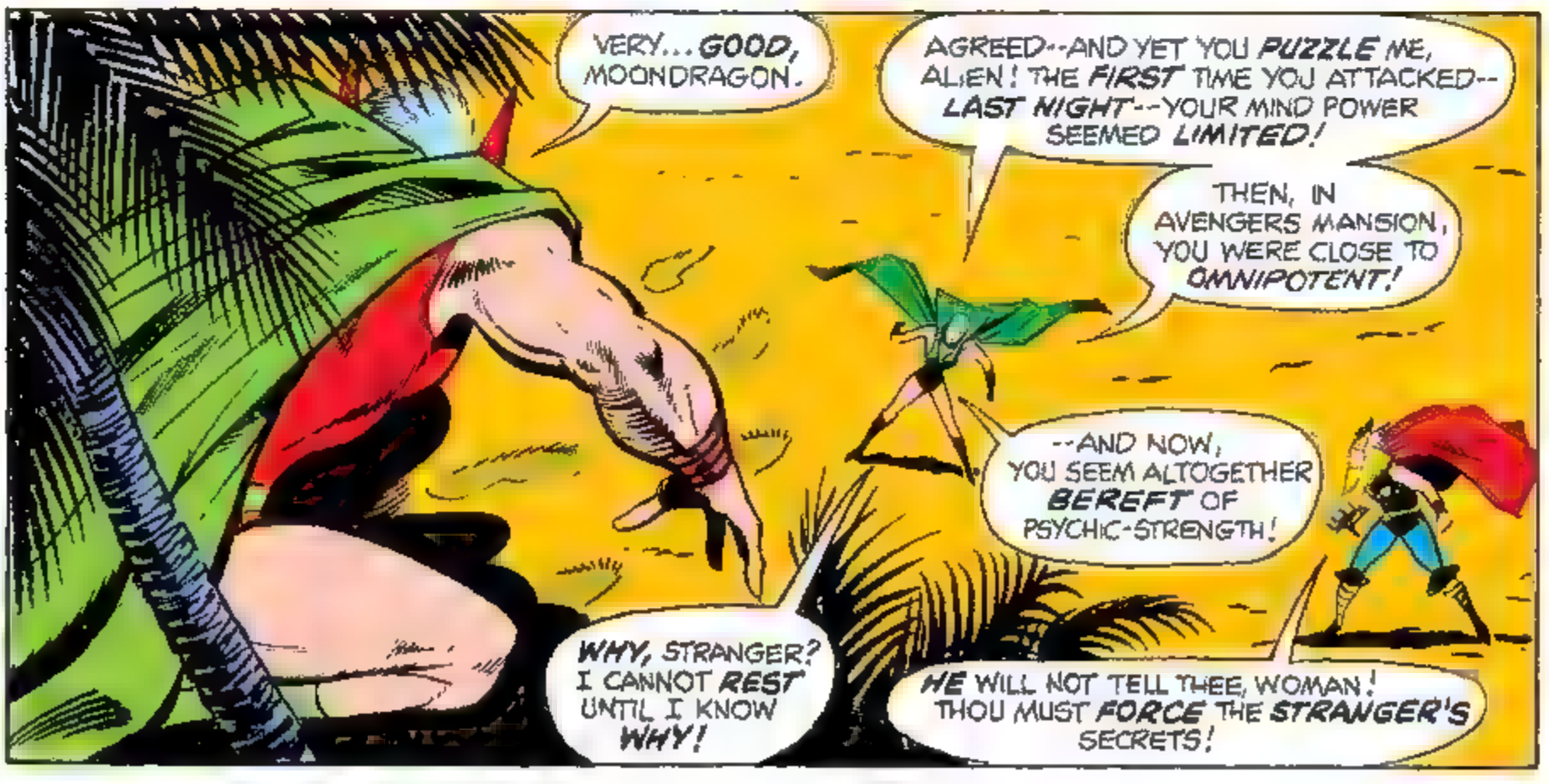

--AND CONTINUES THROUGH A SUDDENLY SHADOWY STRANGER!
THOR SPINS HEAD OVER HEELS, HIS MOMENTUM SENDING HIM FLYING!

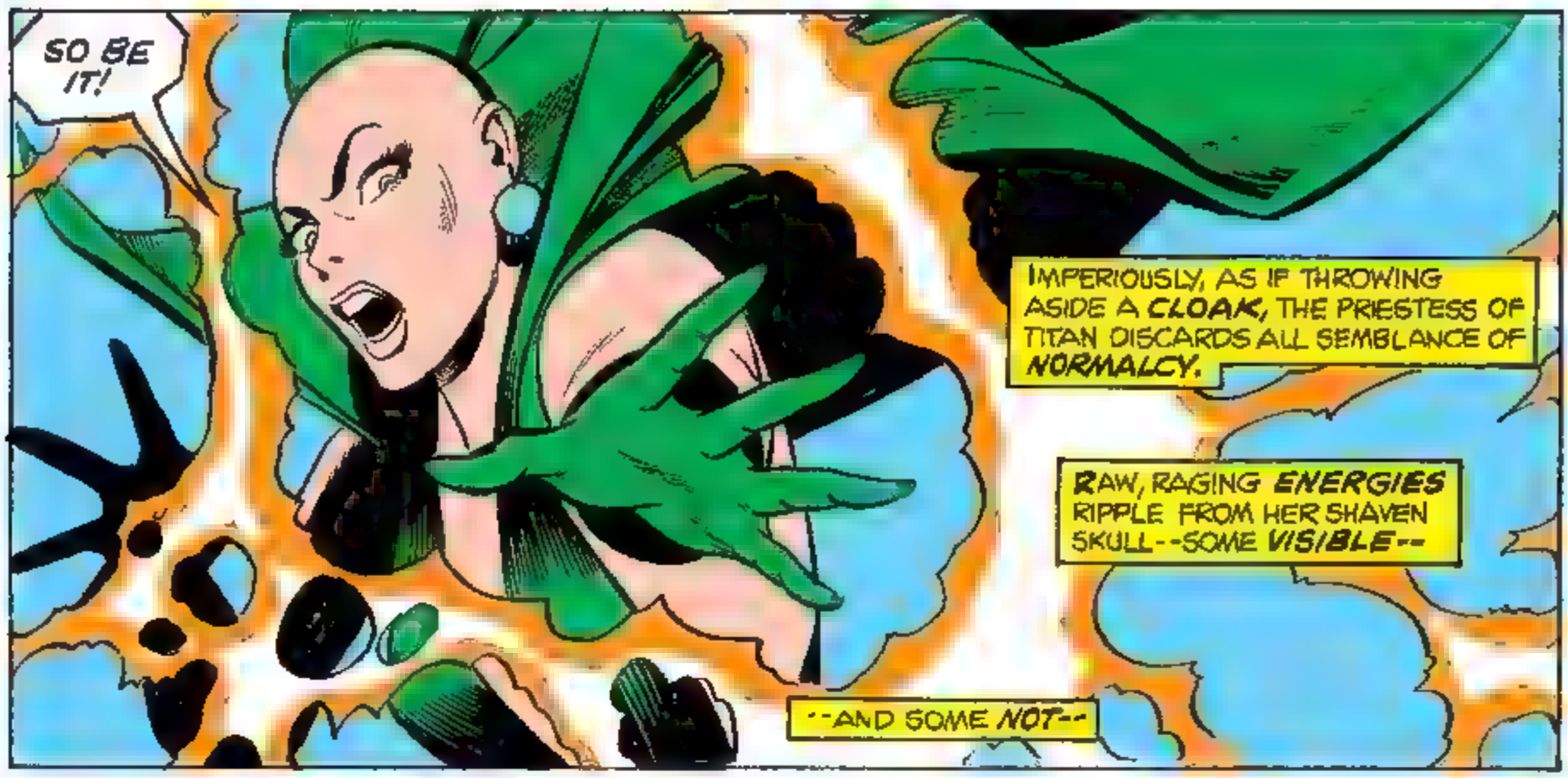

'TWAS NAUGHT BUT A PHANTOM, AFTER ALL!
THEN, THAT DOTH MEAN--

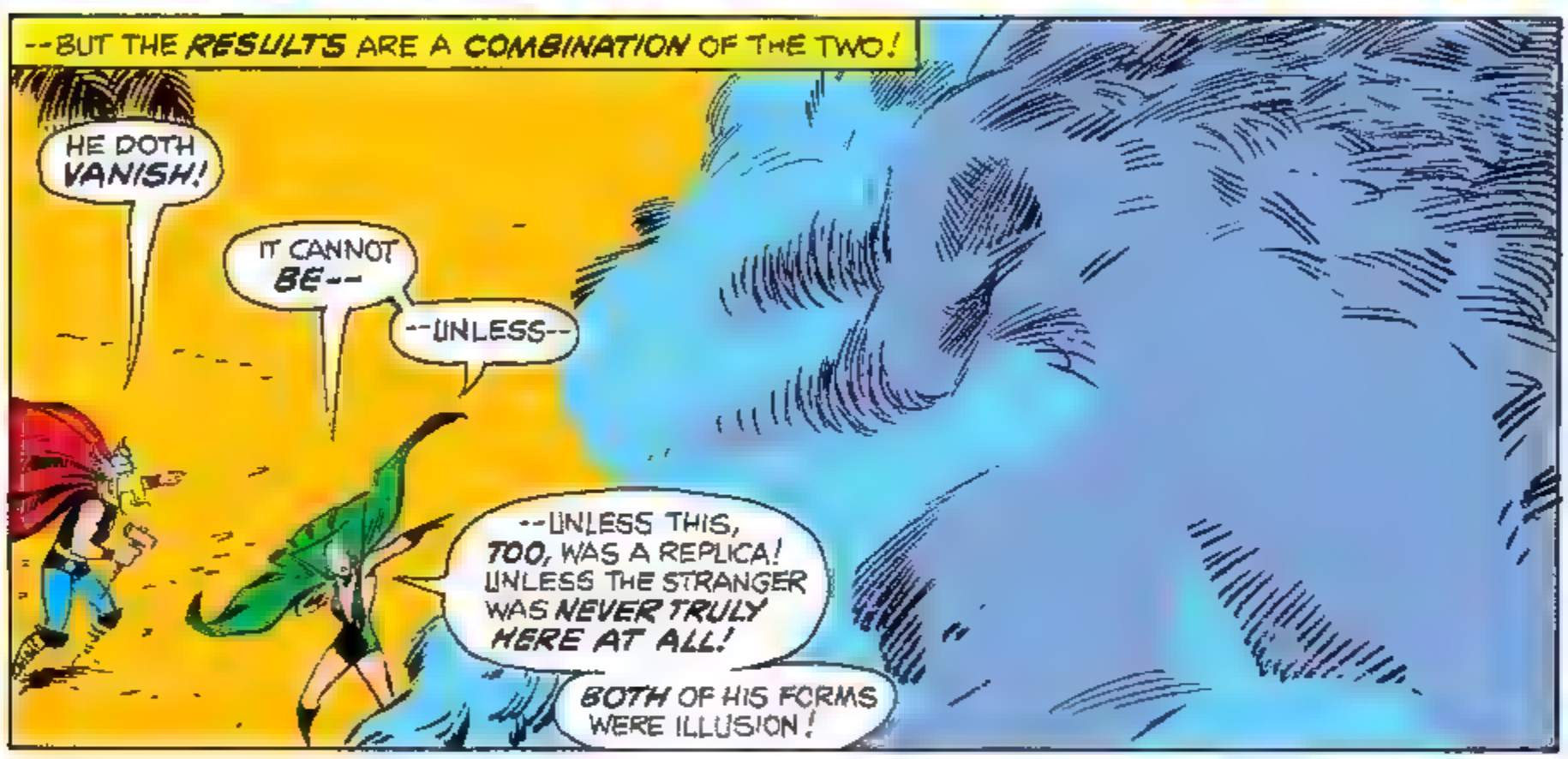

--THAT I AM THE TRUE STRANGER! YES!
THIS MOONDRAGON MUST SCAMPER LIKE A MOONMOUSE, DESPITE ALL HER BRAVADO!
MICE CAN VANQUISH ELEPHANTS ON EARTH, SO THEY SAY--

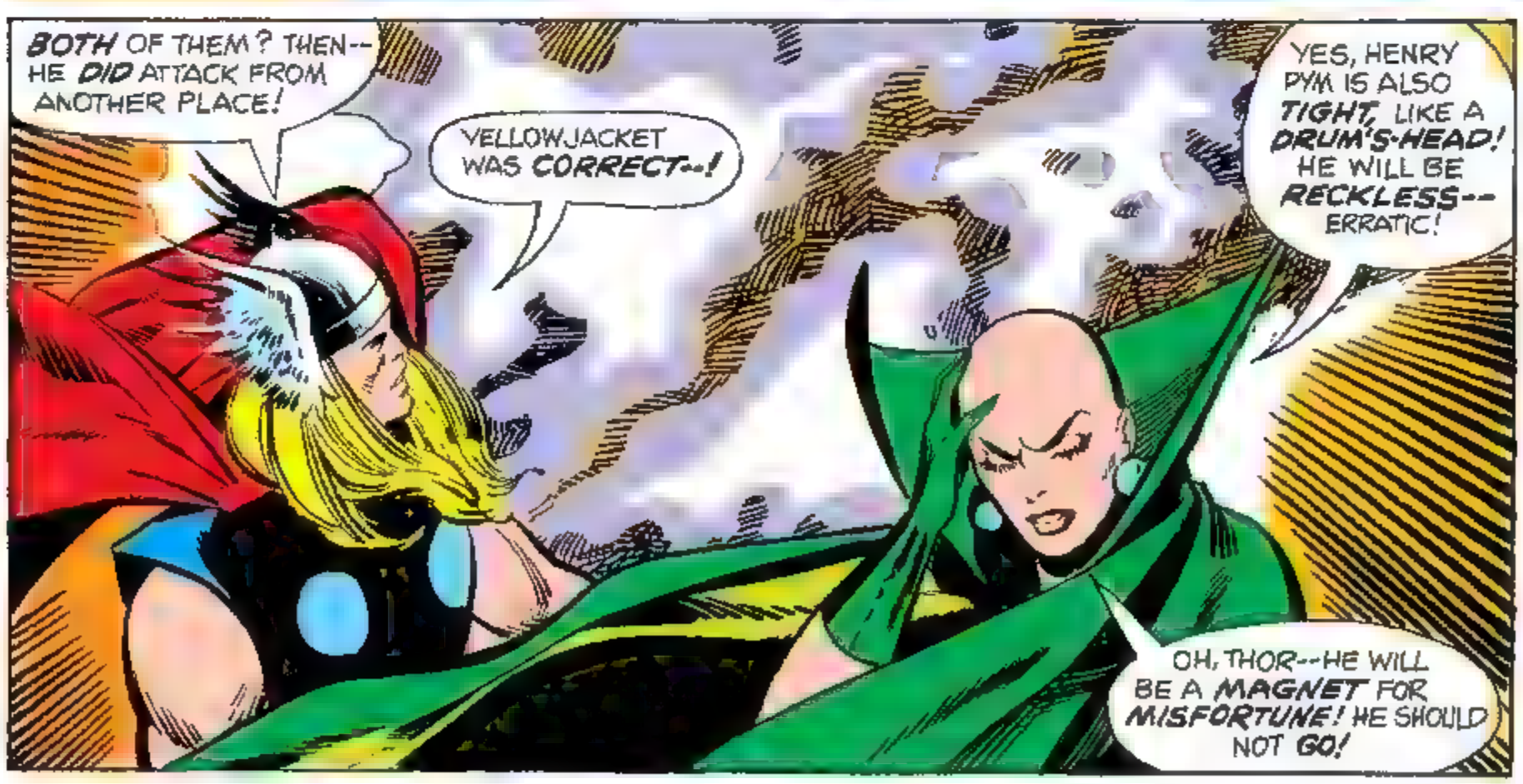

--AND THIS MOUSE KNOWS HOW TO BRING THE GRANDEST OPPONENT TO HIS KNEES--
TOK!

--AND HIS FATE!
WOM!


VERY... GOOD, MOONDRAGON.
AGREED--AND YET YOU PUZZLE ME, ALIEN! THE FIRST TIME YOU ATTACKED--LAST NIGHT--YOUR MIND POWER SEEMED LIMITED!
THEN, IN AVENGERS MANSION, YOU WERE CLOSE TO OMNIPOTENT!
--AND NOW, YOU SEEM ALTOGETHER BEREFT OF PSYCHIC-STRENGTH!
WHY, STRANGER? I CANNOT REST UNTIL I KNOW WHY!
HE WILL NOT TELL THEE, WOMAN! THOU MUST FORCE THE STRANGER'S SECRETS!


SO BE IT!
IMPERIOUSLY, AS IF THROWING ASIDE A CLOAK, THE PRIESTESS OF TITAN DISCARDS ALL SEMBLANCE OF NORMALCY.
RAW, RAGING ENERGIES RIPPLE FROM HER SHAVEN SKULL--SOME VISIBLE--
--AND SOME NOT--


--BUT THE RESULTS ARE A COMBINATION OF THE TWO!
HE DOTH VANISH!
IT CANNOT BE--
--UNLESS--
--UNLESS THIS, TOO, WAS A REPLICA! UNLESS THE STRANGER WAS NEVER TRULY HERE AT ALL!
BOTH OF HIS FORMS WERE ILLUSION!


BOTH OF THEM? THEN--HE DID ATTACK FROM ANOTHER PLACE!
YELLOWJACKET WAS CORRECT--!
YES, HENRY PYM IS ALSO TIGHT, LIKE A DRUM'S-HEAD! HE WILL BE RECKLESS--ERRATIC!
OH, THOR--HE WILL BE A MAGNET FOR MISFORTUNE! HE SHOULD NOT GO!

THOU DOST NOT *UNDERSTAND*, WOMAN! HE *MUST* GO! 'TIS ALL THE MAN CAN *DO* FOR THE ONE HE DOTH *CHERISH* ABOVE ALL *ELSE!*

AND HE'LL *ROUT* THAT STRANGER SOME-HOW, *MARK MY WORDS!*

BUT--*TELL* ME OF THIS FEELING THOU DIDST PLUCK FROM EMPTY AIR, IS SUCH A THING *NATURAL* FOR THEE?

IS IT LIKE UNTO THE *EMPATHIC NATURE* OF THE *MADONNA?*

MANTIS, YOU MEAN?

WE WOULD ALLOW MOONDRAGON TO *ELUCIDATE* HER POWERS FOR YOU, BUT RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT--

--THE AVENGERS *QUINJET* IS GLIDING TOWARD A *RENDEZVOUS* ONE HUNDRED MILES *ABOVE* HER--

--AND *OTHER* EVENTS OF INTEREST MUST NOW TAKE *CENTER STAGE!*

GOOD WORK, I. M.--YOU LOCKED THAT TRACTOR BEAM RIGHT *ON* 'IM THE *FIRST TIME!*

WELL, THIS SHIP *WAS* ENGINEERED AND BUILT BY *STARK INDUSTRIES,* HANK.

OH--OF COURSE. *SORRY,* I JUST WANT TO GET *UP* THAT *BEAM* AND GET *AT* THE *STRANGER!* I'M NOT THINK NG ABOUT MUCH *ELSE!*

NO *LIE?* WELL, MAYBE YOU *SHOULD,* THOUGH!

JUST BECAUSE YOU GUYS HAVE WAYS TO ENTER *ROCKET SHIPS* DOESN'T MEAN THE OWNER'S A *GONER!*

THE X-MEN HAD THE *FIRST* RUN-IN WITH THE STRANGER*

--AND MY *PERONAL EXPERIENCES* ADVISES *EXTREME*--

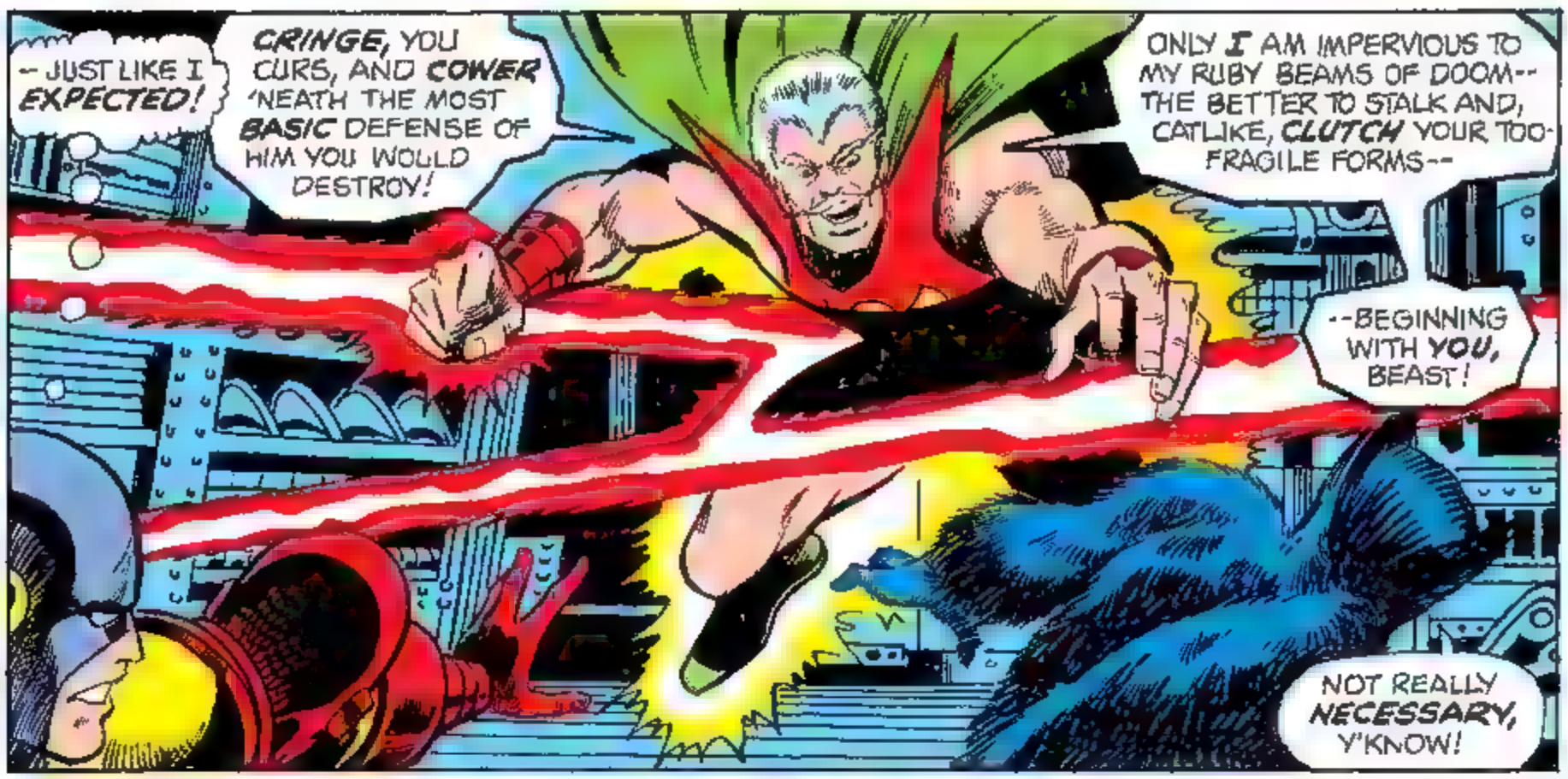
*X-MEN #11.--L.

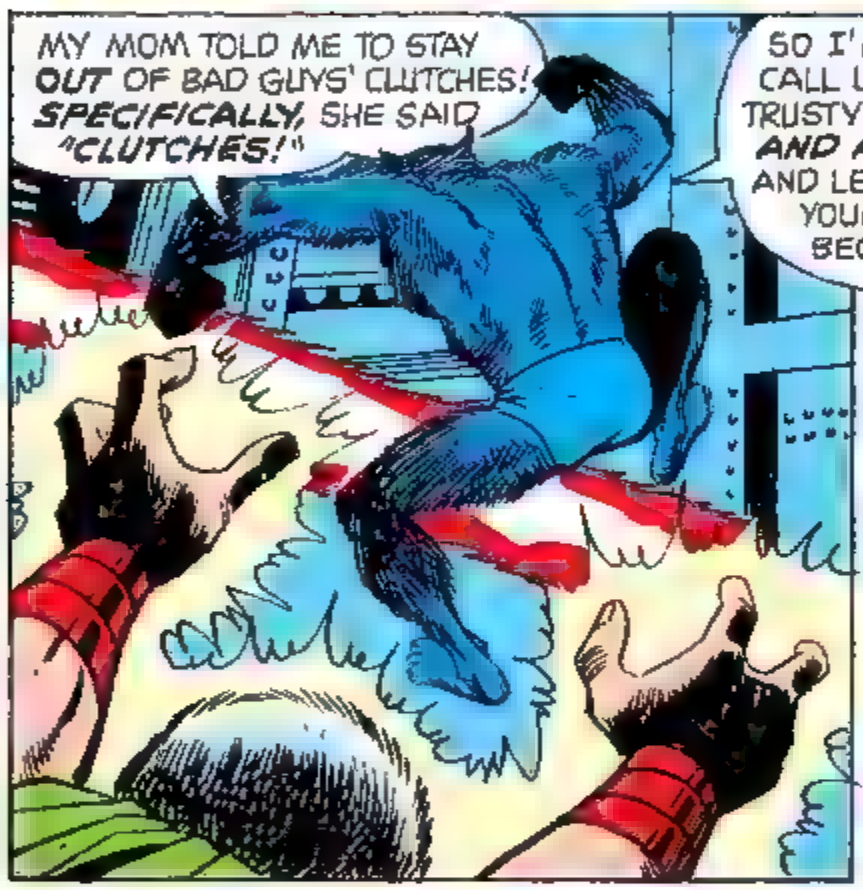
GET DOWN!

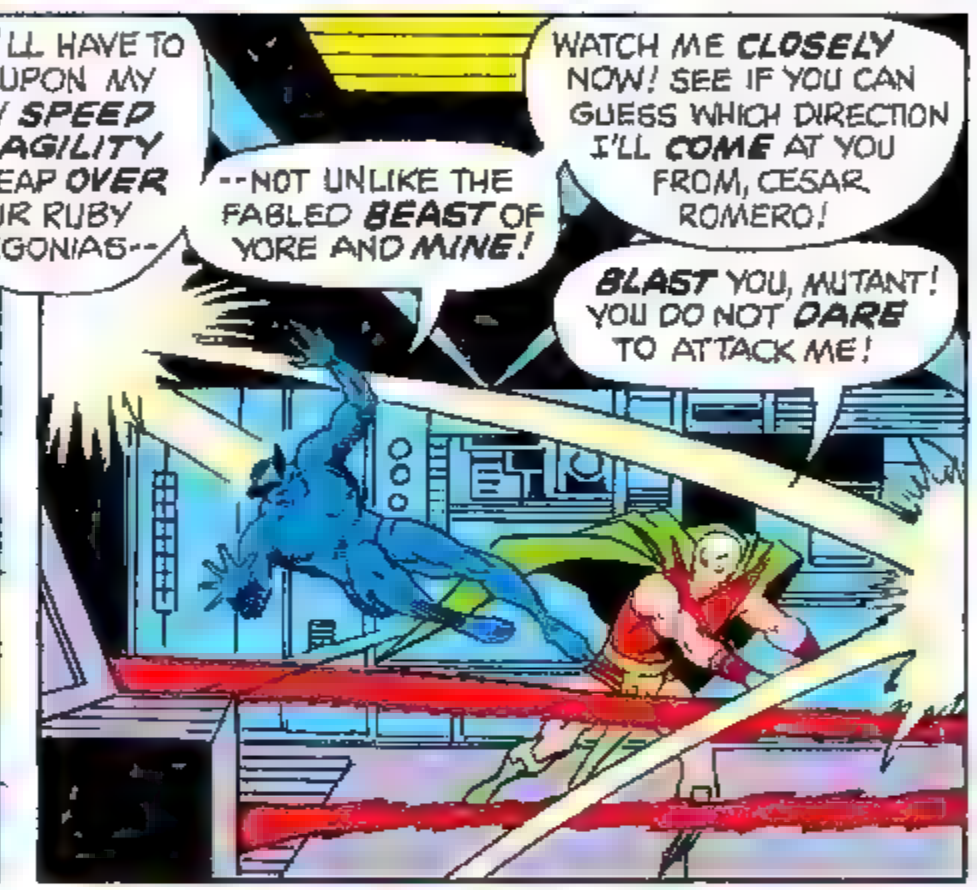
LASERS--JUST *FOUR FEET* FROM THE *FLOOR*--

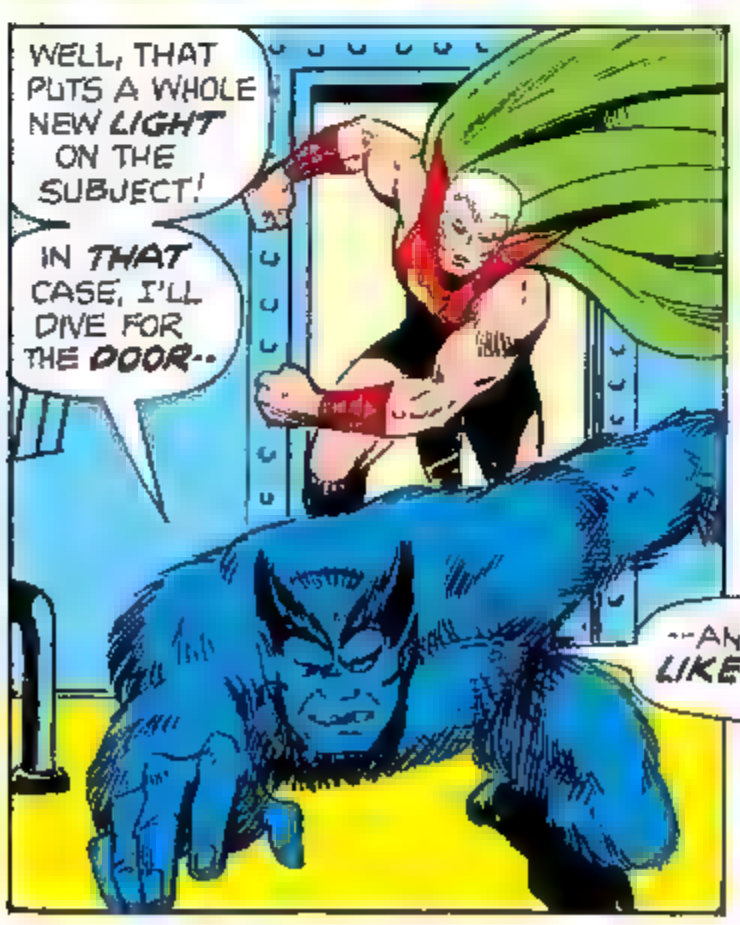
--SET TO CATCH YOU RIGHT ACROSS THE *HEART!*

NASTY--


-- JUST LIKE I EXPECTED!
CRINGE, YOU CURS, AND COWER 'NEATH THE MOST BASIC DEFENSE OF HIM YOU WOULD DESTROY!
ONLY I AM IMPERVIOUS TO MY RUBY BEAMS OF DOOM-- THE BETTER TO STALK AND, CATLIKE, CLUTCH YOUR TOO-FRAGILE FORMS--
--BEGINNING WITH YOU, BEAST!
NOT REALLY NECESSARY, Y'KNOW!


MY MOM TOLD ME TO STAY OUT OF BAD GUYS' CLUTCHES! SPECIFICALLY, SHE SAID "CLUTCHES!"

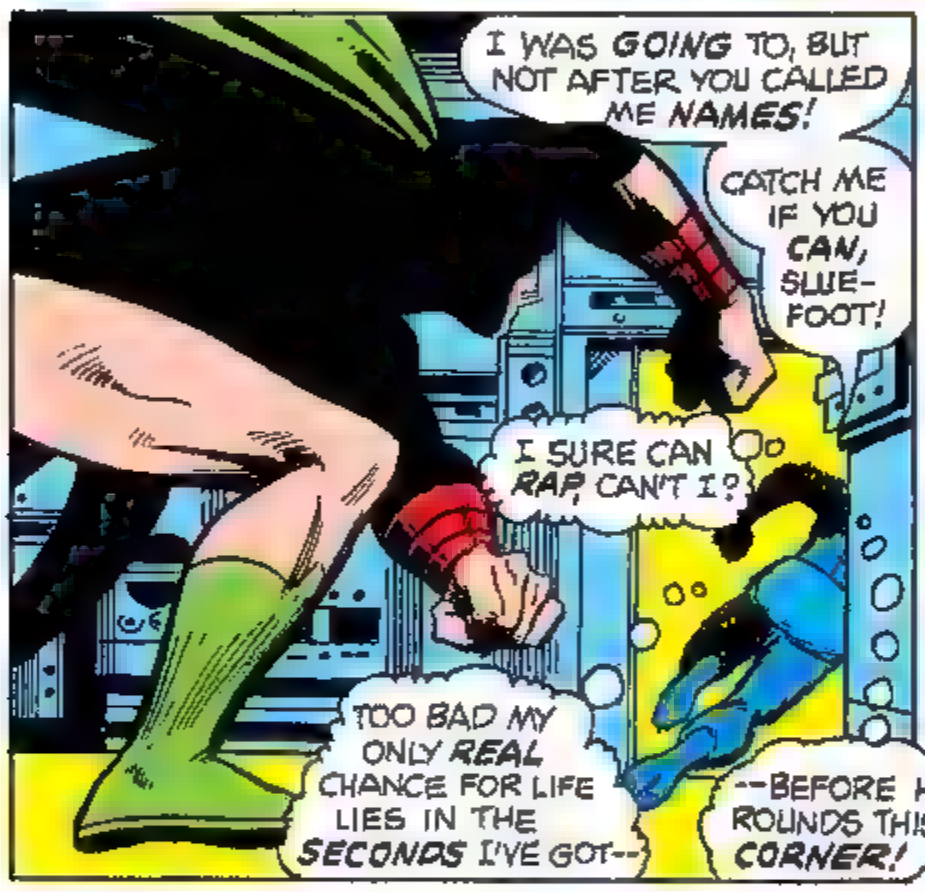

SO I'LL HAVE TO CALL UPON MY TRUSTY SPEED AND AGILITY AND LEAP OVER YOUR RUBY BEGONIAS--
--NOT UNLIKE THE FABLED BEAST OF YORE AND MINE!
WATCH ME CLOSELY NOW! SEE IF YOU CAN GUESS WHICH DIRECTION I'LL COME AT YOU FROM, CESAR ROMERO!
BLAST YOU, MUTANT! YOU DO NOT DARE TO ATTACK ME!


WELL, THAT PUTS A WHOLE NEW LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT!
IN THAT CASE, I'LL DIVE FOR THE DOOR--
--AND RUN LIKE CRAZY!

THE DOOR! THAT'S OUR ESCAPE--
SLAM!
TOO LATE!
IT CLOSED BEHIND HIM AUTOMATICALLY!

LISTEN, STRANGER-- I'D BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO MY GRAND REOPENING WITH THE AVENGERS FOR SOME TIME NOW--
--AND SO FAR, YOU'VE BUMMED THE WHOLE TRIP!
IF YOU CATCH ME, YOU'RE GONNA BE SORRY!

YOU CAN ELUDE ME WITH YOUR GREATER SPEED, BUT YOUR COWARDICE WILL TRIP YOU UP IN THE END!
END IT NOW!
BUFFOON!
HALT!


I WAS GOING TO, BUT NOT AFTER YOU CALLED ME NAMES!
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN, SLUE-FOOT!
I SURE CAN RAP, CAN'T I?
TOO BAD MY ONLY REAL CHANCE FOR LIFE LIES IN THE SECONDS I'VE GOT--
--BEFORE HE ROUNDS THIS CORNER!

ACCURSED X-MAN! THIS TIME--
WHAT IN THE WORLD!!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, WHITEY?

YOU SEND SOME'A YOUR BOYS TO PUT THE HEAT ON MY MOB, YOU GOTTA EXPECT A CALL FROM BROTHER ORCHID!
NYAH?
SUDDENLY--

--THERE'S A FLASH OF GRAY AND PULSING LIGHT, AND THE STRANGER IS NO MORE!
IN HIS PLACE SQUATS A--
TOAD!
IT WAS YOU ALL ALONG!
I DROPPED MY THOUGHT-FORM!
YOU STARTLED ME!
THAT'S WHAT I INTENDED!

I THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING FISHY AFTER YOU RAN AWAY FROM MOONDRAGON AT THE BALLPARK, BUT RAN RINGS AROUND HER LATER-- AFTER YOU CAME BACK TO YOUR POWER SOURCE, EVIDENTLY--

--BUT I NEVER IN MY WILDEST DREAM IMAGINED YOU WERE THE MAN!

DON'T TRY ANY MORE MIND-TRICKS ON ME, BROTHER MUTANT! I WON'T BUY 'EM!

JUST COME ALONG QUIETLY!

YOU THINK ME HELPLESS?!

ALWAYS, IT IS THE SAME! "HE IS BUT THE TOAD," THEY SAY! "FORGET HIM! HE IS A DWARF-ISH DOLT!"

"HE HAS NO POWER SAVE THAT FOUND N SOME MASTER!"

NO! I AM "JUST THE TOAD" NO LONGER!

I SWORE TO BE MY OWN MASTER!* THAT'S THE REASON I STOLE MY MARVELOUS MACHINES!

THERE ARE MANY OTHERS WITH WHICH TO DESTROY YOU BACK IN THE MAIN HALL!

THE TOAD! RUNNING IN HERE!

YOU SHALL REGRET UNDER-ESTIMATING ME!

*NOTE: AVENGERS #53.

HE'S HEADED FOR HIS CONTROL PANEL--- HOPPING NORMALLY AND STILL STAYING BELOW THE FOUR-FOOT LEVEL! HE CAN OUT-DISTANCE ANY OF US TRYING TO CHASE HIM STOOPED OVER!

A MOMENTARY PAUSE...

BUT HE WON'T ESCAPE ME-- NOT IF I'M THE SAME HEIGHT!

SO YOU LIKE MACHINES, EH?

LIKE THE HOVER MINES, EH?

STAY AWAY!

NO, TOAD! YOU'RE GOING TO PAY--

--JUST LIKE ANY OTHER MAN!

BAM

YOU FELT SORRY FOR YOUR-SELF--

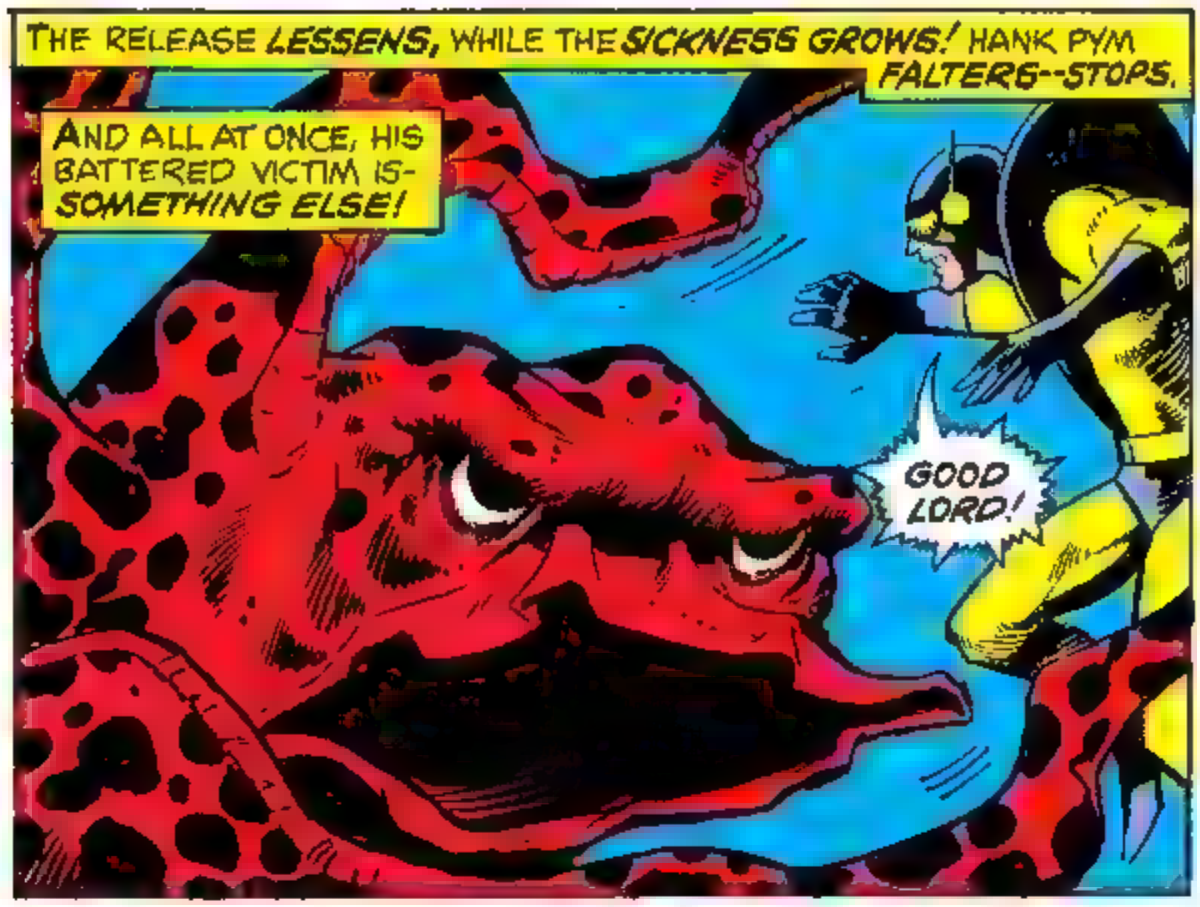
--SO YOU TORE UP THE WARM-EST, BRIGHTEST WOMAN WHO EVER WALKED THE EARTH!

I DON'T CARE HOW SCRAWNY YOU ARE--

POW!

--LITTLE MAN--

-- I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU TILL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT AT ALL!
THERE'S RELEASE IN THIS--BONE-SHUDDERING RELEASE OF ALL HIS FURY AND FRUSTRATION IN EACH HEAVY BLOW--
--BUT THERE'S SAD SICKNESS, TOO!


THE RELEASE LESSENS, WHILE THE SICKNESS GROWS! HANK PYM FALTERS--STOPS.
AND ALL AT ONCE, HIS BATTERED VICTIM IS-SOMETHING ELSE!
GOOD LORD!

WHERE DID THIS CREATURE COME FROM?
UNNGH! GOT ME!
DON'T BELIEVE IN IT!

TELL YOURSELF IT'S NOT REALLY HAPPENING!
HE'LL NEVER COLLECT HIS WITS IN TIME! HE'S TOO STRUNG OUT!
WELL, IT'S MY FAULT HE'S IN THIS MESS--
--I LET THE TOAD SLIP AWAY FROM ME WHILE I WAS LORDING IT OVER HIM, AND THEN COULDN'T CATCH HIM UNDER THE LASERS--

--BUT BETTER LATE THAN NEVER, I GUESS!
POW

I HOPE YOU HAVE THE COMMON DECENCY TO JUST LIE THERE FOR A WHILE!
LIKE I SAID, TOAD, YOU'VE BEEN A REAL THORN IN MY PAW RIGHT ALONG!

THE TOAD HITS THE DECK, DECISIVELY-- AND BEFORE THE ECHO CAN COME BACK A SUDDEN SILENCE SETTLES!

THE ECHO CRESCENDOS LIKE A CANNONADE AS ALL EYES TURN TOWARD THE SOURCE OF THE SILENCE, IRON MAN.

GOT IT! I KNEW I COULD FIGURE IT!

THIS ONE CUTS THE LASERS!

THOSE HALLUCINATIONS ARE ROUGH, AREN'T THEY, HANK? THERE WAS A TIME, AGAINST THE MANDARIN--

HEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YEAH. YEAH, I'M OKAY.

YOU'RE RIGHT. THEY'RE ROUGH.

THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN A LOT ROUGHER, IF THIS ACCURSED X-MAN HAD NOT SHATTERED MY CONCENTRATION WITH HIS TRICKS!

BUT KNOW THIS, AVENGERS: YOU HAVE NOT HEARD THE LAST OF THE TERRIBLE TOAD!

TOADIE, I TOLD YOU TO LIE DOWN! WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU, ANYWAY?

YOU NEVER USED TO BE THIS BLOOD-THIRSTY!

DO YOU HEAR? YOU CALL ME "TOADY"--

"--A WORD MEANING "OBSEQUIOUS SYCOPHANT!" I WAS NOTHING TO MAGNETO--MUCH LESS TO MYSELF, UNTIL THE REAL STRANGER STOLE US AWAY TO HIS WORLD! OF ALL MUTANTS I WAS THE MOST DESPISED!

* X-MEN #11 --L.

"BUT I HAD FAITH IN MY MASTER--WHO DESERTED ME AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.* THOUGH HE WAS SWIFTLY RETURNED, THE SEEDS OF REBELLION WERE ALREADY SOWN!

"IT TOOK TWO YEARS, BUT I HARVESTED THAT CROP.**

* X-MEN # 18
** AVENGERS #53.--L.

"MY SOLITUDE AND FREEDOM WERE SHORT-LIVED, HOWEVER. FIRST I WAS CAPTURED BY THE SENTINELS, AND NEXT, THAT REUNITED ME WITH THE SCARLET WITCH!*

"I HAD LOVED HER FROM AFAR WHEN WE WERE EVIL MUTANTS TOGETHER! NOW I MADE EXCUSES TO REMAIN BY HER SIDE, A SLAVE TO HER EVERY GESTURE--

"--AND SHE NEVER KNEW!

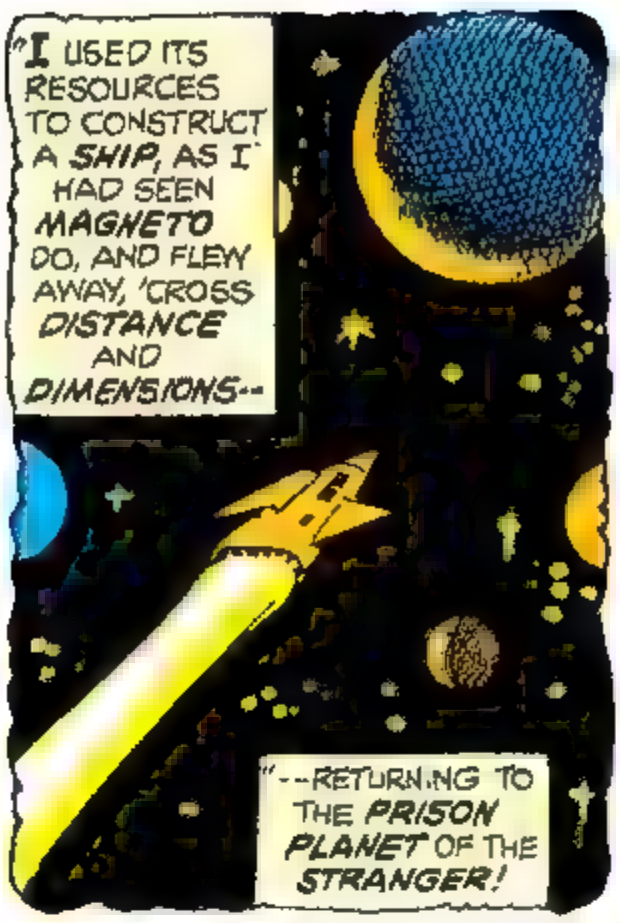
"THAT IS HOW I CAME TO BE WITH HER AND PIETRO THE NIGHT ARKON TOOK THEM!**

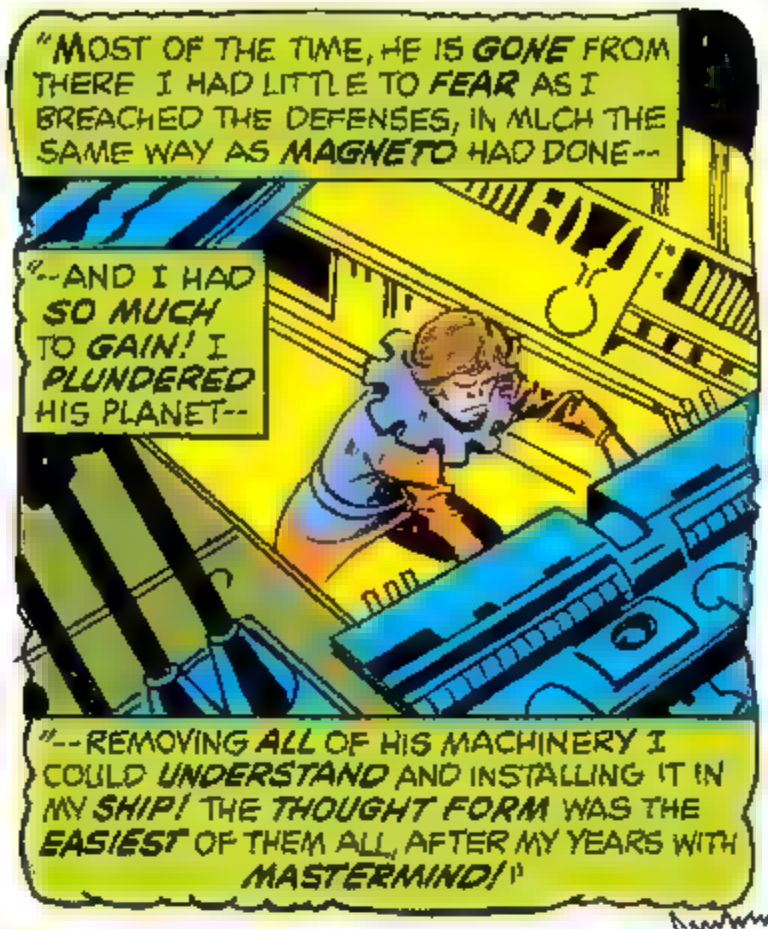
* X-MEN # 59
** AVENGERS # 75

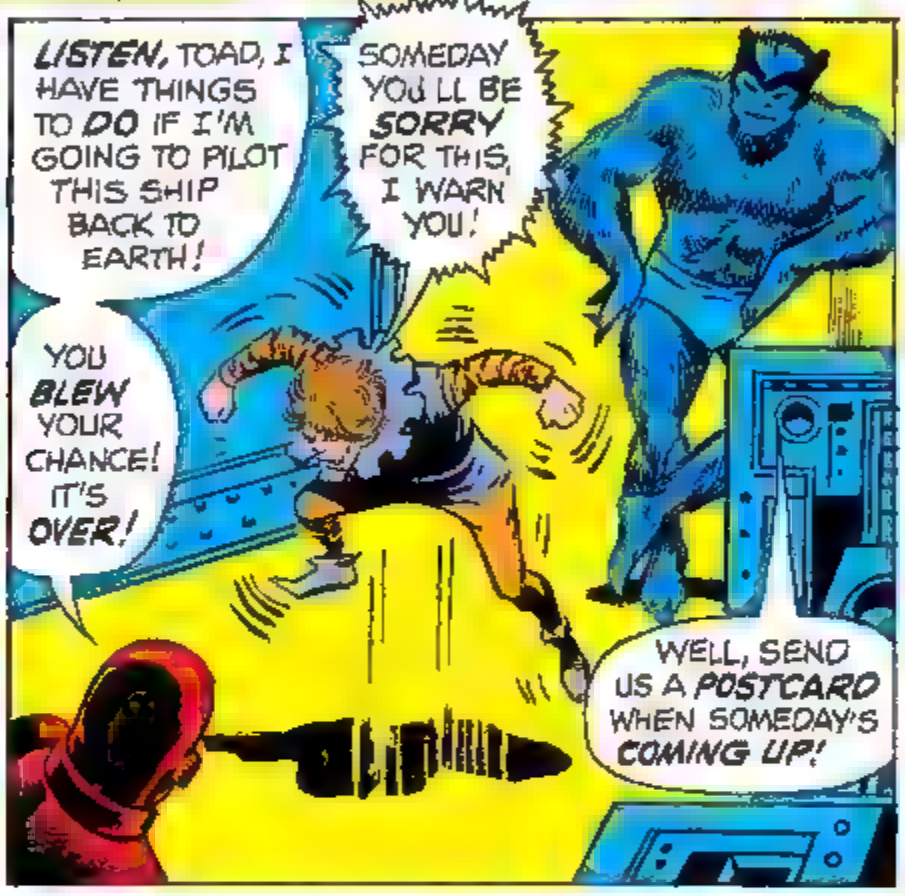
"SOON AFTER, YOU'LL RECALL, THE AVENGERS RESCUED THEIR TEAM-MATES--*

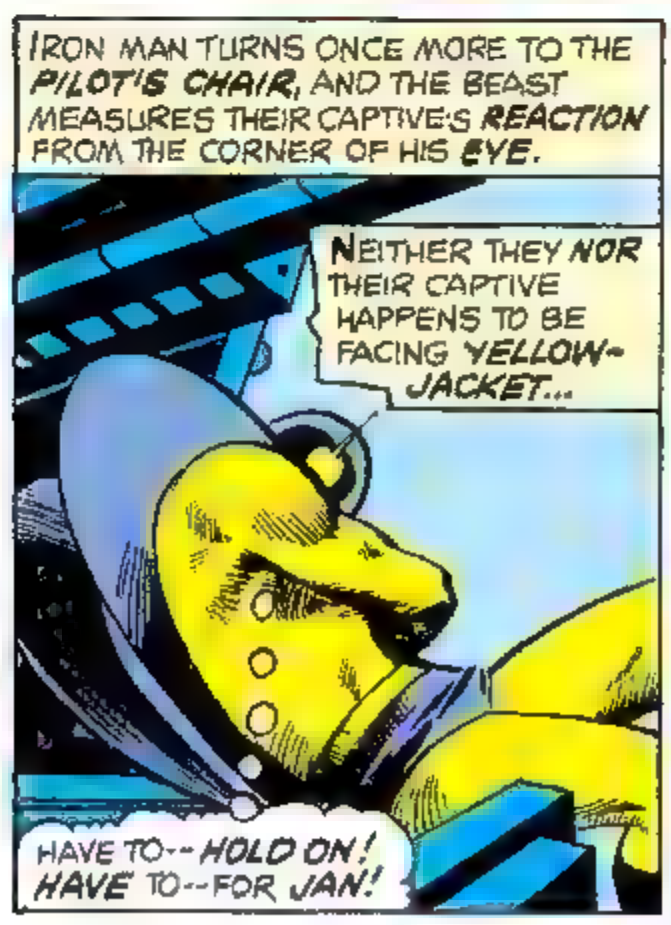
"--BUT I ASKED TO REMAIN ON ARKON'S WORLD, FOR I HAD PLANS!

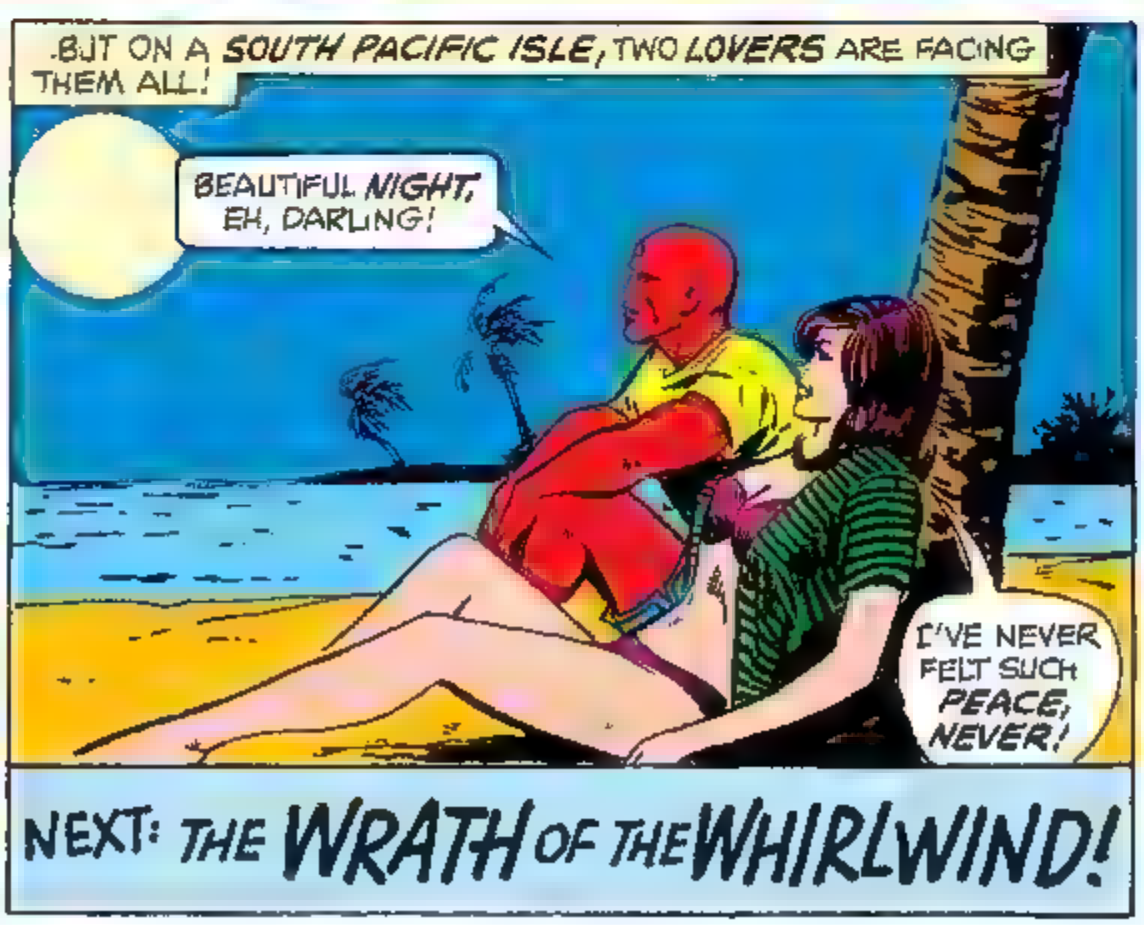
* AVENGERS # 76.--L.











NEXT: THE WRATH OF THE WHIRLWIND!

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS®
FOOL! YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR THE WHIRLWIND!
FIRST I'M GOING TO KILL YOUR WIFE, AVENGER!
AND THEN I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
PRESCRIPTION: DEATH!

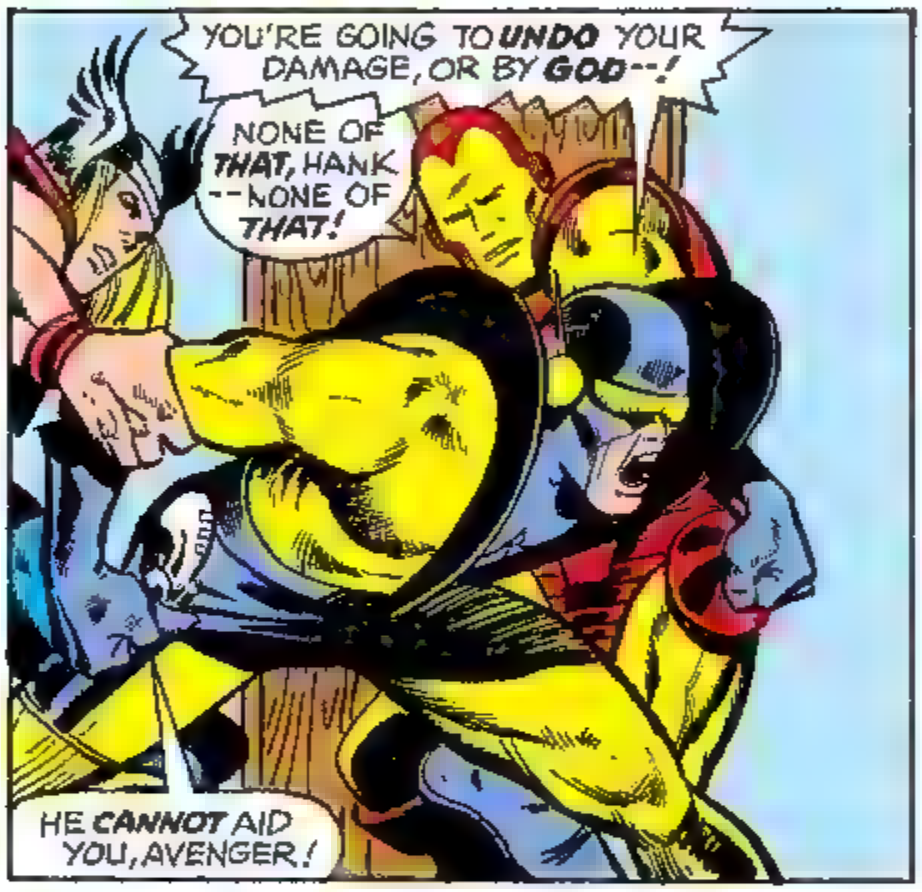
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! TM

STORY	ART	INKING	LETTERING, I. WATANABE COLORING, PHIL RACHELSON	EDITOR
STEVE ENGLEHART	GEORGE TUSKA	VINCE COLLETTA		LEN WEIN

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO, FOOL? I AM BUT A THIEF OF OTHERS' ARMAMENT, KNOWING NOTHING--
THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH, TOAD!

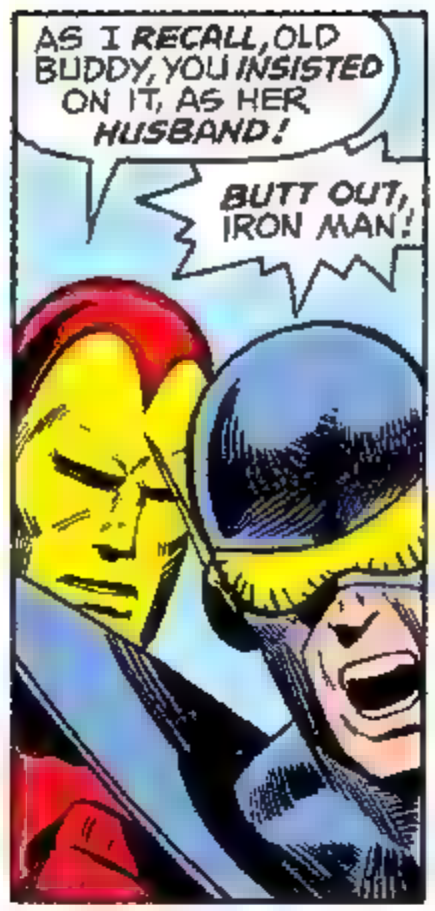
WE THOUGHT YOU WERE THE STRANGER! WE PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS TO TRACK YOU DOWN!
I WON'T ACCEPT AN IMPOSTER!
MY WIFE WON'T DIE BECAUSE OF YOU!


YOU'RE GOING TO UNDO YOUR DAMAGE, OR BY GOD--!
NONE OF THAT, HANK --NONE OF THAT!
HE CANNOT AID YOU, AVENGER!

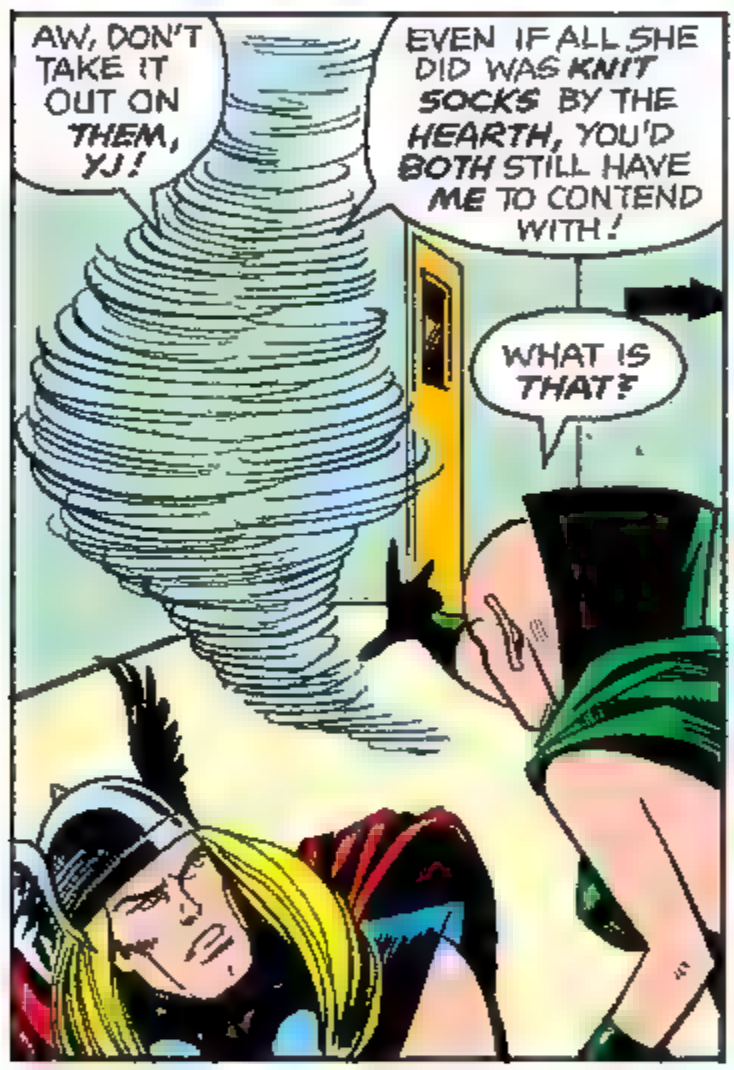
QUIET, ALL OF YOU!
SUPERHEROES OR NOT IN THIS HOSPITAL YOU FOLLOW MY ORDERS--AND THIS PATIENT NEEDS PEACE AND QUIET!
I'M CLEARING THE ROOM!

C'MON, MUTIE!
SWINE! YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE LAST OF ME!
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED YOU ALL INSIDE IN THE FIRST PLACE...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WELL, MS. PYM HAS BEEN STABLE THUS FAR, BUT SHE'S STILL CRITICAL--
THEN WHY DID YOU LET US IN THERE?

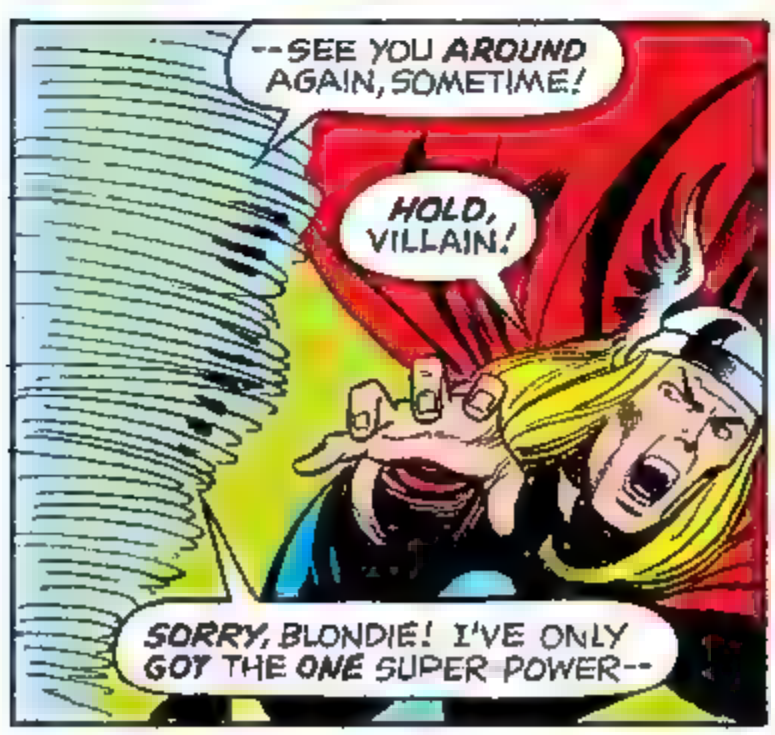

AS I RECALL, OLD BUDDY, YOU INSISTED ON IT, AS HER HUSBAND!
BUTT OUT, IRON MAN!

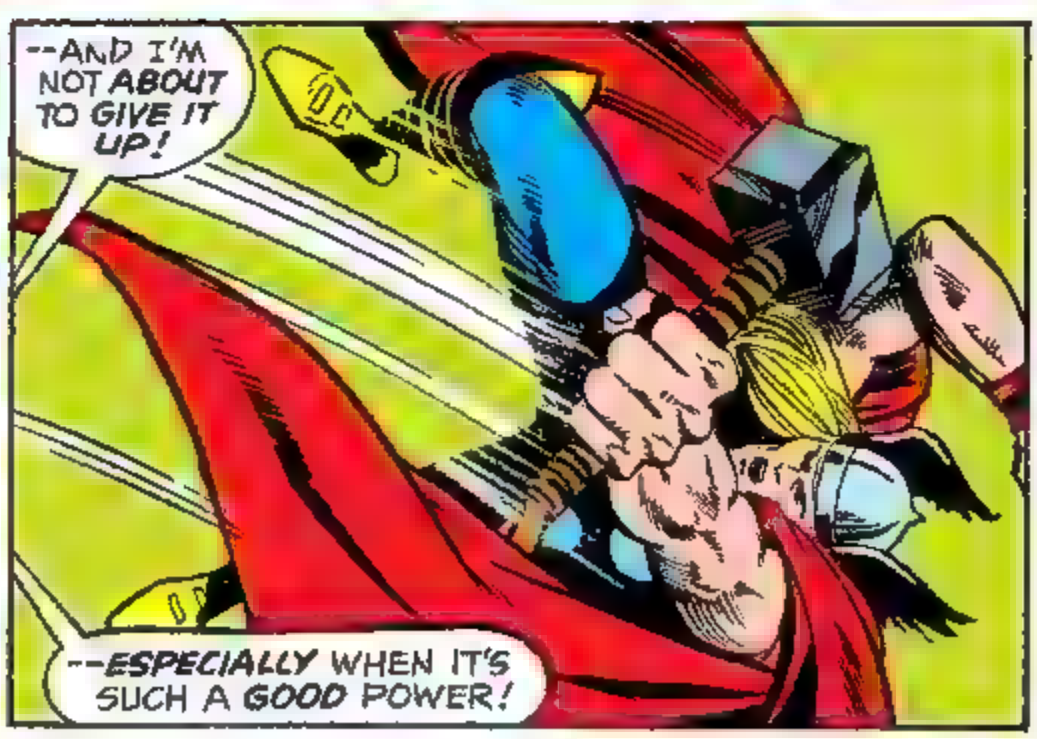
JAN WOULDN'T BE LYING THERE IF SHE HADN'T ACCEPTED THE AVENGER'S CALL TO JOIN UP AGAIN!
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
TONG!
OW!


AW, DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON THEM, YJ!
EVEN IF ALL SHE DID WAS KNIT SOCKS BY THE HEARTH, YOU'D BOTH STILL HAVE ME TO CONTEND WITH!
WHAT IS THAT?

HE DOTH CALL HIMSELF WHIRLWIND, PRIESTESS, ANCIENT FOE TO HENRY PYM AND HIS WIFE--
--AND TO US, AS WELL!
RIGHT YOU ARE, THOR--

--BUT TODAY, IT'S ONLY THE WASP I WANT!
OH, EXCUSE ME--I MUST BE GOING--


--SEE YOU AROUND AGAIN, SOMETIME!
HOLD, VILLAIN!
SORRY, BLONDIE! I'VE ONLY GOT THE ONE SUPER POWER--

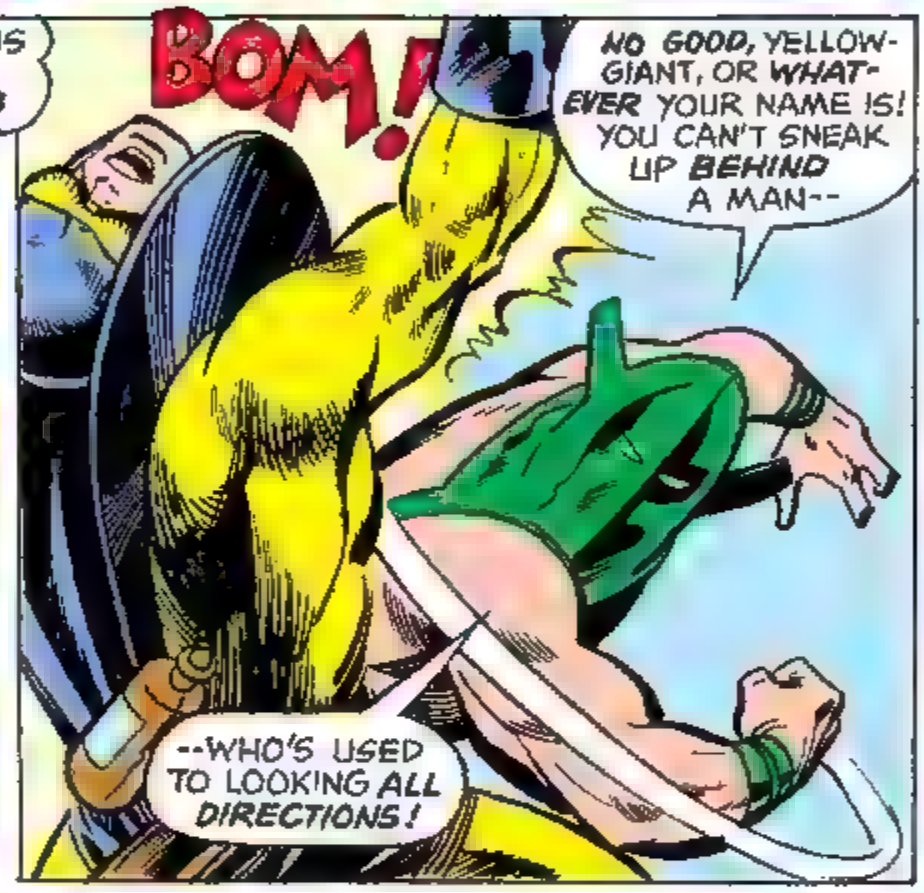

--AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO GIVE IT UP!
--ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S SUCH A GOOD POWER!

NOBODY CAN LAY A GLOVE ON ME! THEY NEVER COULD--EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE KID!
FACE IT, FANS: I'M GOING INSIDE!

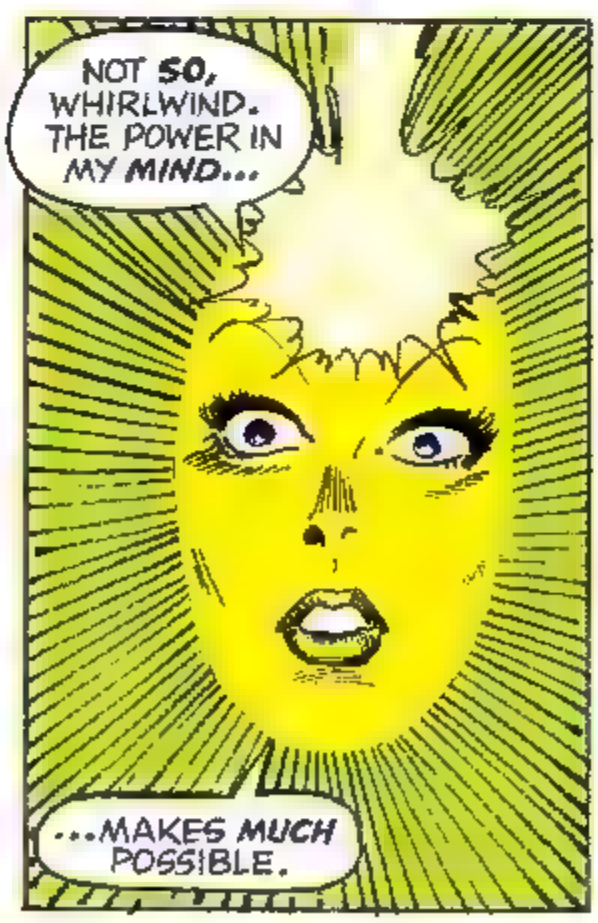
EXCEPT THAT I DON'T HAVE TO SOIL MY GLOVES ON YOU WHILE I HAVE MY REPULSOR RAYS, WHIRLY!

UH UH, I. M..!
I CAN SHIFT TOO FAST FOR YOU TO GET A BEAD ON ME!

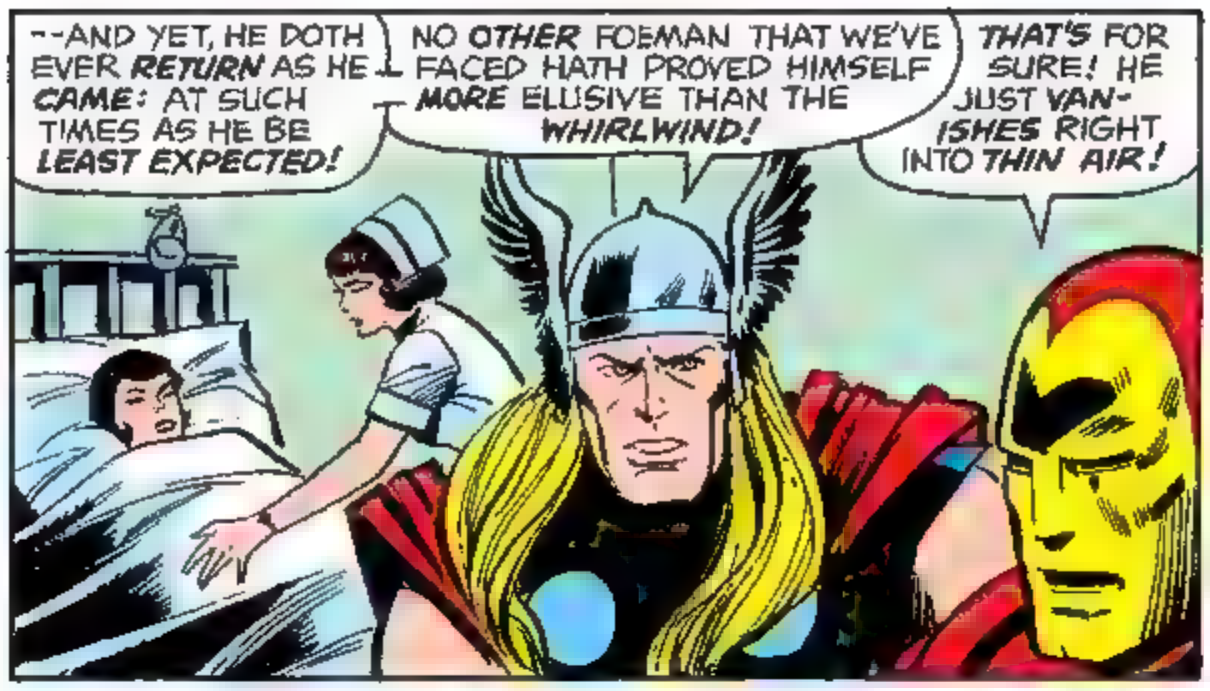
JUST THINK: YOU CAN MISS ME BEFORE I'M GONE!
HE GOT PASS ALL THE OTHERS AS I KNEW HE WOULD!
MY ONLY CHANCE IS NOW WHILE HE'S STOPPED TO GRAB HER!
YOU CAN MISS JAN AFTERWARDS!


BOM!
NO GOOD, YELLOW-GIANT, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS! YOU CAN'T SNEAK UP BEHIND A MAN--
--WHO'S USED TO LOOKING ALL DIRECTIONS!

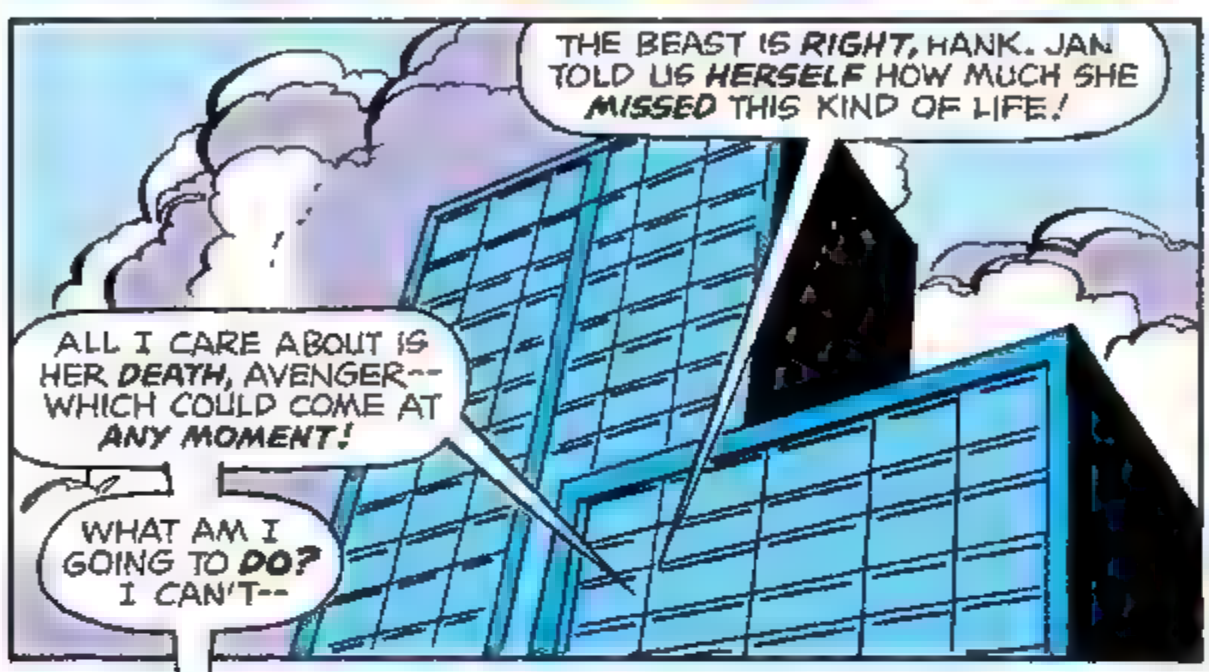
ONLY YOU'D BE DUMB ENOUGH TO TRY SOMETHING LIKE THAT ANYWAY, OLD--
--WH--?
GETTIN' DIZZY...
...IMPOSSIBLE...

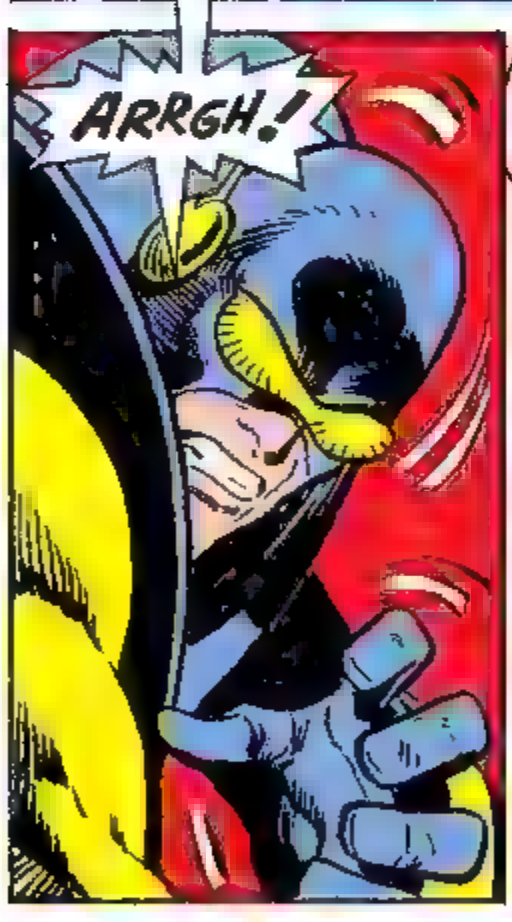

NOT SO, WHIRLWIND. THE POWER IN MY MIND...
...MAKES MUCH POSSIBLE.

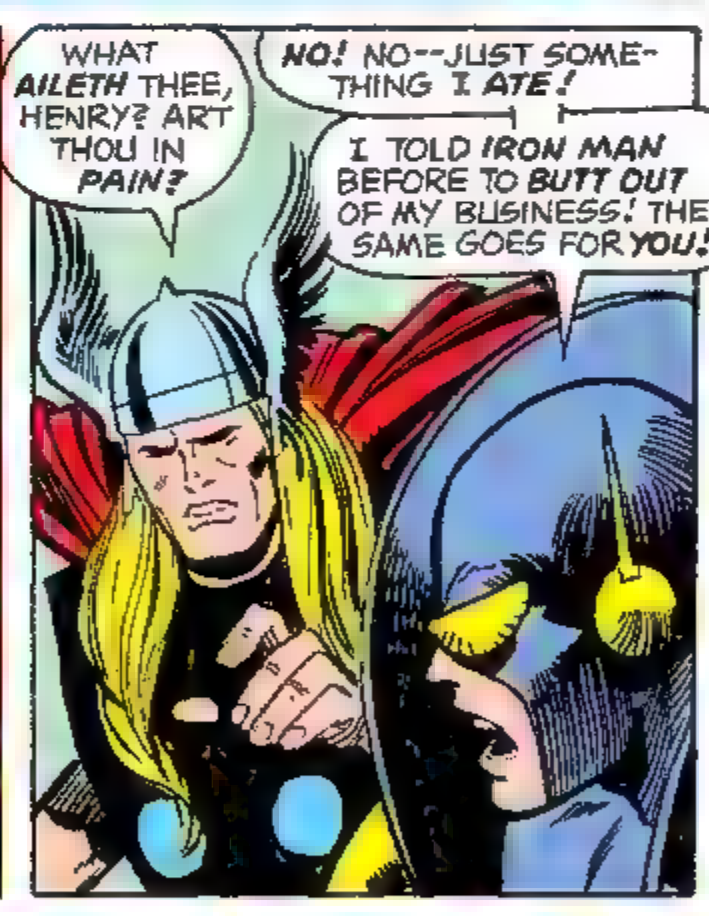
BEHOLD--THE POWER OF OF THE MIND-BURST!
FEEL IT SEAR THROUGH YOUR BRAIN--CHOKE YOUR VERY THOUGHTS!
30
GOTTA GET AWAY--!
CAN'T FIGHT--THAT--!


--AND YET, HE DOTH EVER RETURN AS HE CAME: AT SUCH TIMES AS HE BE LEAST EXPECTED!
NO OTHER FOEMAN THAT WE'VE FACED HATH PROVED HIMSELF MORE ELUSIVE THAN THE WHIRLWIND!
THAT'S FOR SURE! HE JUST VANISHES RIGHT INTO THIN AIR!

AND SO NOW THERE'S A NEW MENACE AFTER JAN! IT'S JUST ONE LONG STRING OF DISASTERS!
THIS IS INSANE! INSANE!
THE SUPER-BIZ IS LIKE THAT, THOUGH.


THE BEAST IS RIGHT, HANK. JAN TOLD US HERSELF HOW MUCH SHE MISSED THIS KIND OF LIFE!
ALL I CARE ABOUT IS HER DEATH, AVENGER-- WHICH COULD COME AT ANY MOMENT!
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? I CAN'T--

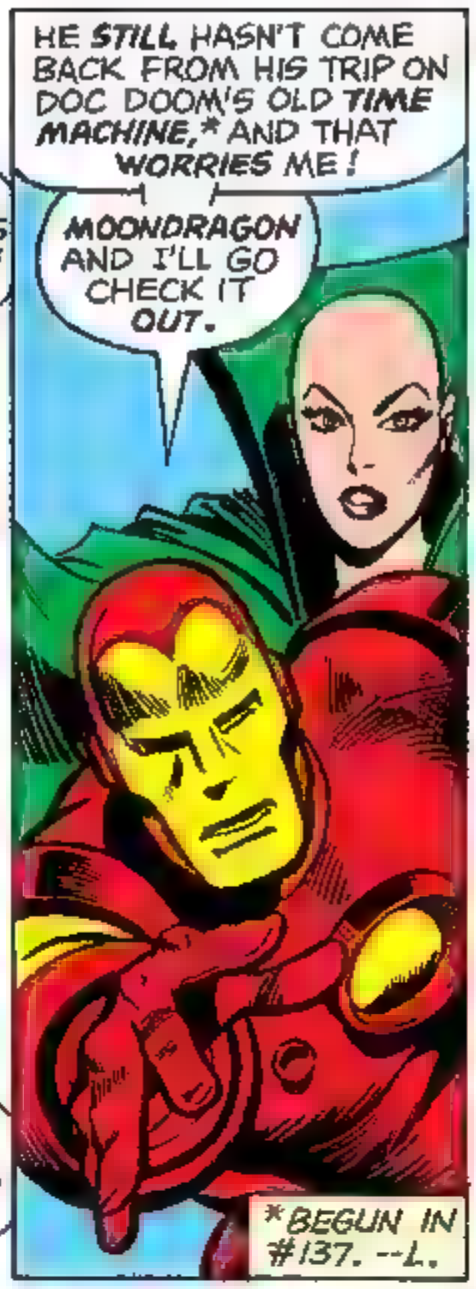

ARRGH!


WHAT AILETH THEE, HENRY? ART THOU IN PAIN?
NO! NO--JUST SOMETHING I ATE!
I TOLD IRON MAN BEFORE TO BUTT OUT OF MY BUSINESS! THE SAME GOES FOR YOU!

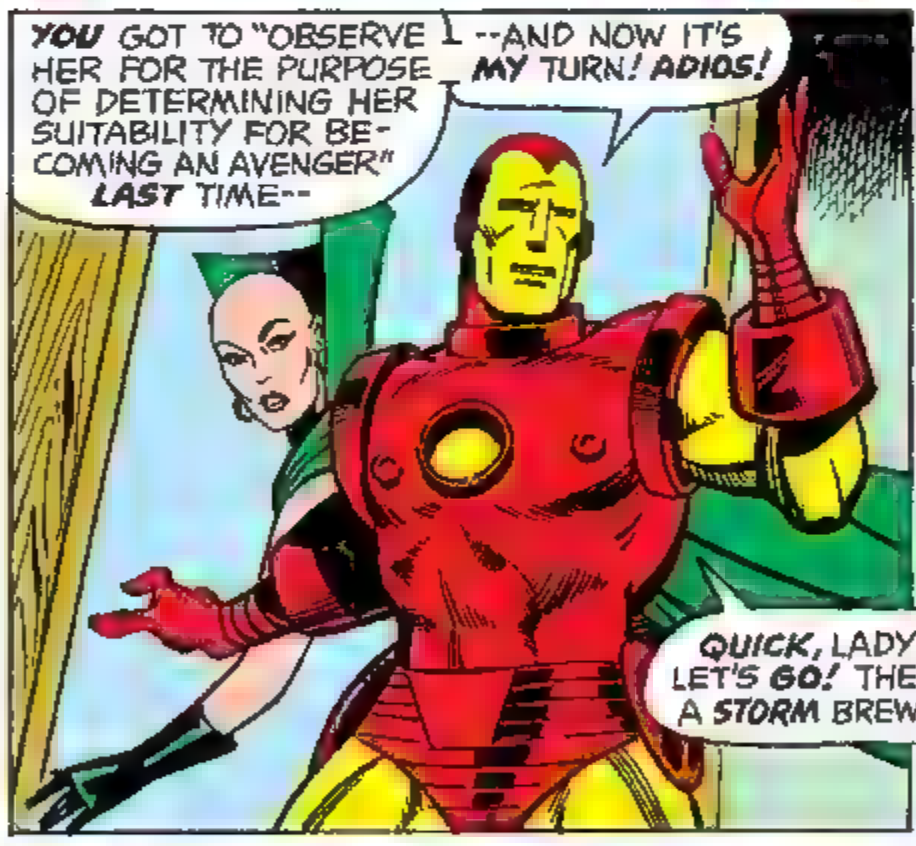
AND IF YOU WON'T LEAVE, I WILL!
BLAST IT! THE PAIN IS BACK-- WORST THAN BEFORE!
I KNEW IT WAS DANGEROUS TO SHRINK--*
*LAST ISSUE. --LEN.
--WITH THAT MICROBE THAT TRAPPED ME AT ANT-SIZE BEFORE STILL IN MY BLOOD! BUT HAD TO DO IT--

RM. 305-316
--AND I'M GETTING GOOD AT STANDING PAIN!
TO THINK HE HELPED FOUND THE AVENGERS!

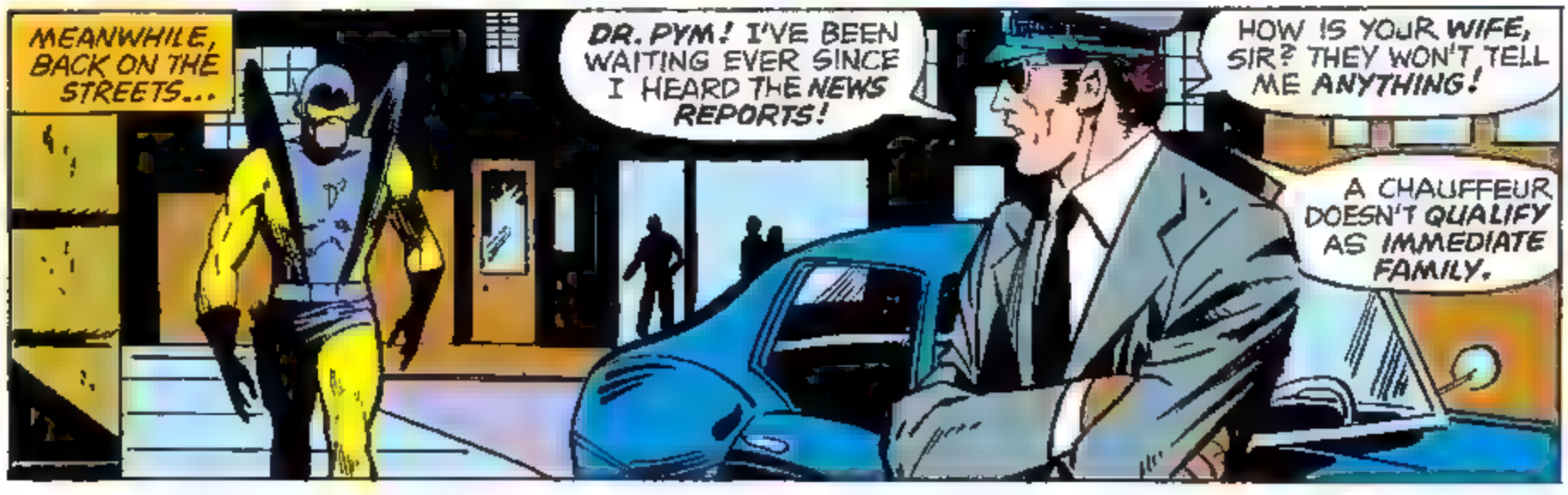
BUT HE HAS TO LET IT ALL OUT SOMEHOW, I GUESS.
IN THE MEAN-TIME, SINCE THERE'S NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO HERE--
--I THINK WE'D BETTER SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HAWKEYE!


HE STILL HASN'T COME BACK FROM HIS TRIP ON DOC DOOM'S OLD TIME MACHINE,* AND THAT WORRIES ME!
MOONDRAGON AND I'LL GO CHECK IT OUT.
*BEGUN IN #137. --L.

IRON MAN! MUST WE AGAIN ENGAGE IN ARGUMENT OVER WHICH ONE OF US DOTH CHAIR THIS TEAM?
THERE'S NO ARGUMENT, THOR--!


YOU GOT TO "OBSERVE HER FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING HER SUITABILITY FOR BECOMING AN AVENGER" LAST TIME--
--AND NOW IT'S MY TURN! ADIOS!
QUICK, LADY--LET'S GO! THERE'S A STORM BREWING!

ODIN'S BLOOD! IS THERE TO BE NO ORDER ANY LONGER?
THE SUPER-BIZ IS LIKE THAT, THOUGH.


MEANWHILE, BACK ON THE STREETS...
DR. PYM! I'VE BEEN WAITING EVER SINCE I HEARD THE NEWS REPORTS!
HOW IS YOUR WIFE, SIR? THEY WON'T TELL ME ANYTHING!
A CHAUFFEUR DOESN'T QUALIFY AS IMMEDIATE FAMILY.

"--FOR THE WHIRLWIND!

"OH YES: YOU'VE PLAYED THE FOOL RIGHT ALONG, "SIR"--RIGHT FROM THE DAY WE FIRST MET!*

"YOU WERE GIANT-MAN THEN--

"--BUT I'VE KICKED YOU AROUND IN ALL YOUR IDENTITIES!

"AND THEN I'D DISAPPEAR, IN THE ONE PLACE YOU NEVER LOOKED!"

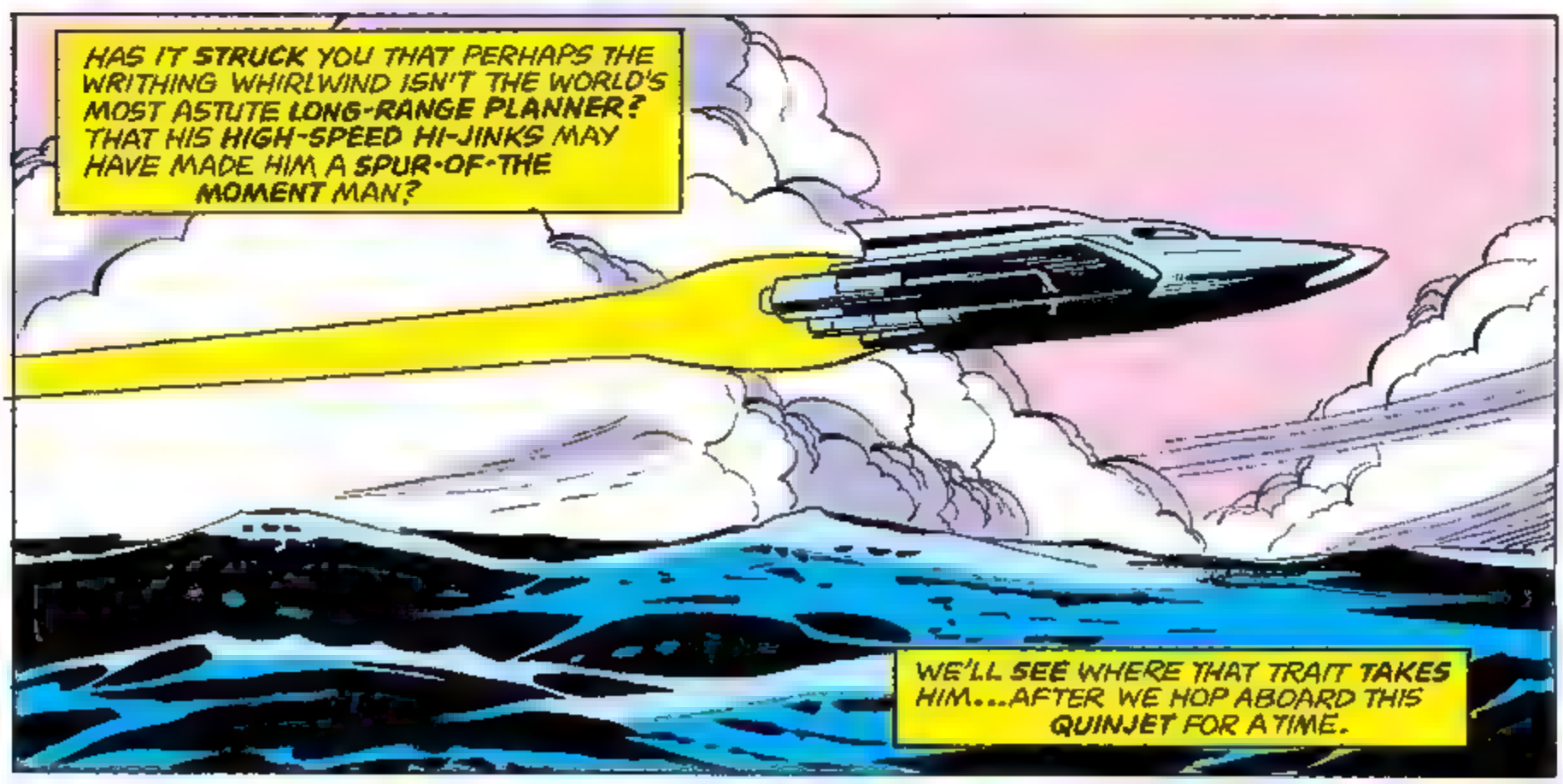
*IN GOOD OLD TALES TO ASTONISH #50.--L.

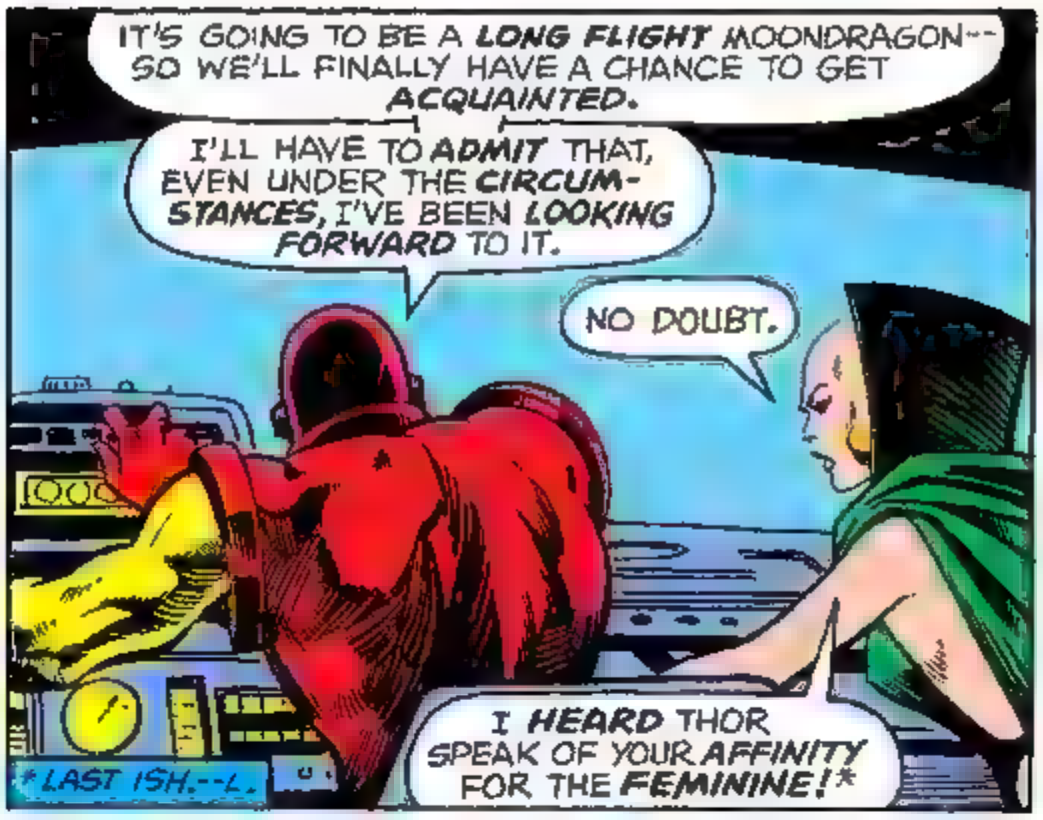
IT'S BEEN LOTSA LOADS'A LAUGHS, BUT I'VE LET IT GO ON TOO LONG! I MIGHT HAVE LET THE PYMS LIVE HAPPILY IN RETIREMENT--
--BUT IF THEY WANT TO STAGE A COMEBACK, THEN SO DO I--AND WHAT BETTER TIME TO KICK SOMEBODY THAN WHEN THEY'RE DOWN?
THE WASP WILL BE EASY TO TAKE, PARTICULARLY WITH VISITING HOURS HAVING ROLLED AROUND!

WHO KNOWS? MAYBE IT'S DESTINED FOR "CHARLES" TO SUCCEED WHERE THE WHIRLWIND FAILED!
301
THAT WOULD BE THE LARGEST LAUGH OF ALL!

HOWEVER, WHEN THE SINISTER SMIRKER SWINGS WIDE THE DOOR, HE FINDS AN UNEXPECTED HITCH IN HIS ROSY REVERIES.
SHE ALREADY HAS VISITORS!
GOOD EVENING, CHARLES. ENTER.

OH...THAT'S ALL RIGHT, THOR. THREE'S A CROWD, AND THEY TOLD ME NOT TO DISTURB HER!
BLAST! I THOUGHT IF PYM LEFT, THEY'D ALL BE GONE!


HAS IT STRUCK YOU THAT PERHAPS THE WRITHING WHIRLWIND ISN'T THE WORLD'S MOST ASTUTE LONG-RANGE PLANNER? THAT HIS HIGH-SPEED HI-JINKS MAY HAVE MADE HIM A SPUR-OF-THE MOMENT MAN?
WE'LL SEE WHERE THAT TRAIT TAKES HIM...AFTER WE HOP ABOARD THIS QUINJET FOR A TIME.

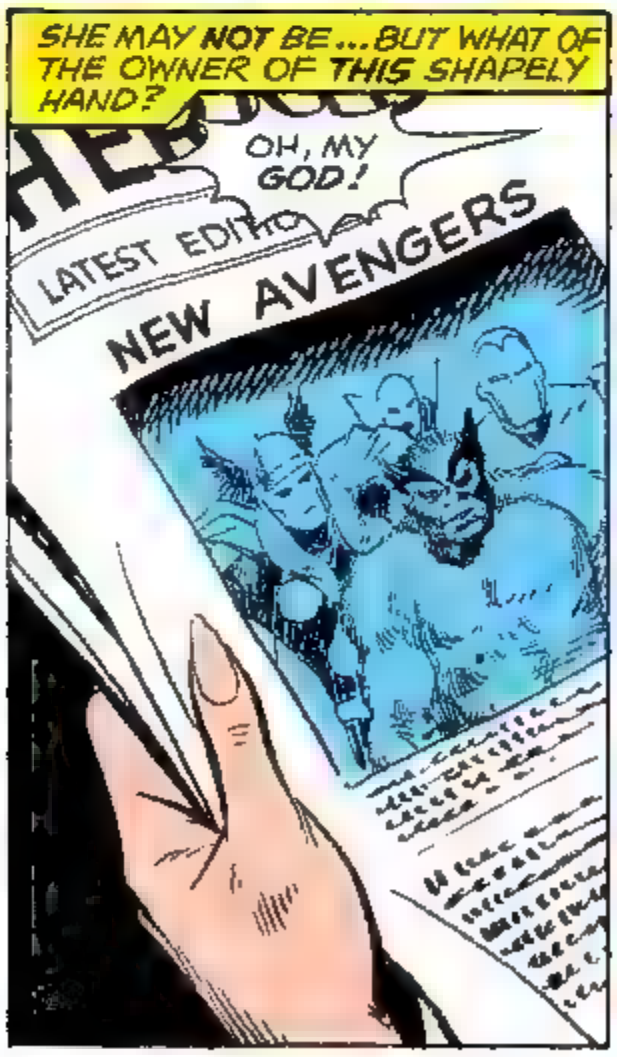

IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG FLIGHT MOONDRAGON-- SO WE'LL FINALLY HAVE A CHANCE TO GET ACQUAINTED.
I'LL HAVE TO ADMIT THAT, EVEN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
NO DOUBT.
I HEARD THOR SPEAK OF YOUR AFFINITY FOR THE FEMININE!*
*LAST ISH.--L.

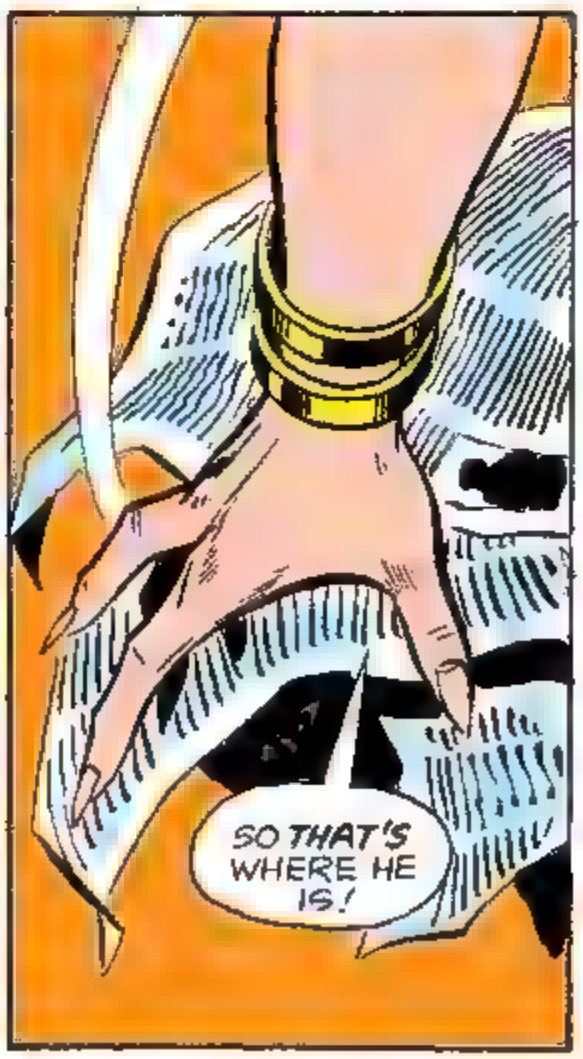
WELL, MY ARMOR MAY BE IRON, BUT THERE'S MOST DEFINITELY A MAN UNDERNEATH IT.
AND YOU'RE AN EXTREMELY STRIKING EXAMPLE OF THE FEMININE!
AND SO?

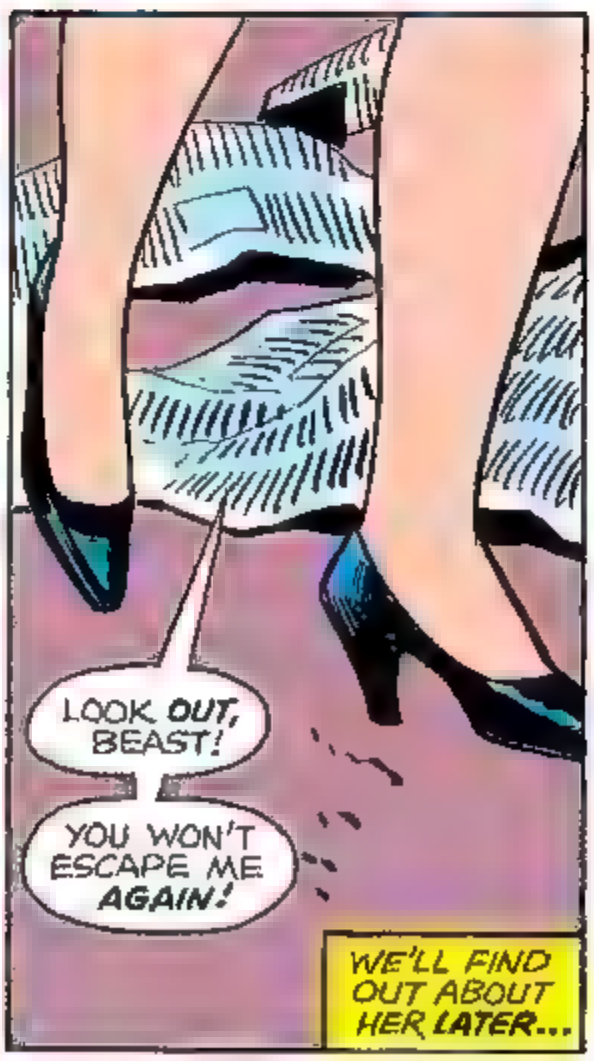
SHOULD I NOW TURN TO YOU LIKE THIS, AND PRESS MY YIELDING LIPS TO YOUR COLD, METALLIC ONES?
WHA--?

YOU MEN ARE ALL THE SAME! FIRST DAREDEVIL, THEN MAR-VELL, AND NOW YOU--
--ALL GRASPING FOR LOVE, FOR COMPANIONSHIP!

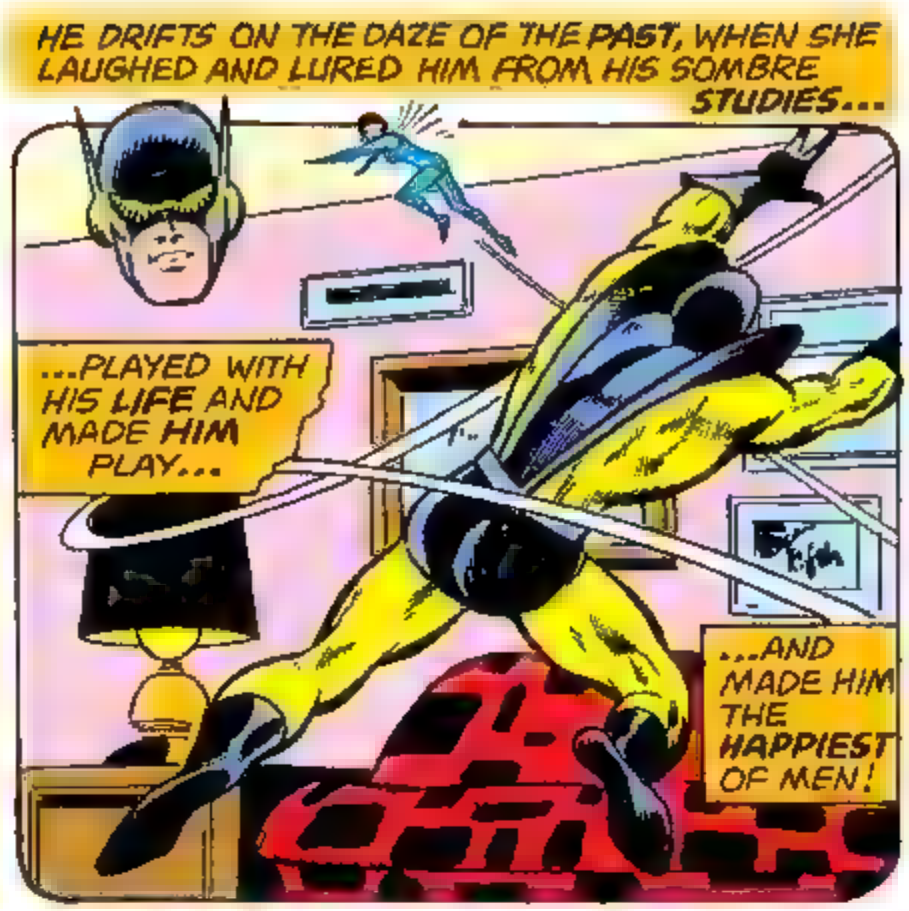
CAN YOU NOT LEAVE ME IN PEACE? CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT THOUGH I WAS BORN ON EARTH--
--I AM NOT AN EARTH-WOMAN?!


SHE MAY NOT BE... BUT WHAT OF THE OWNER OF THIS SHAPELY HAND?
OH, MY GOD!
LATEST EDITION
NEW AVENGERS


SO THAT'S WHERE HE IS!

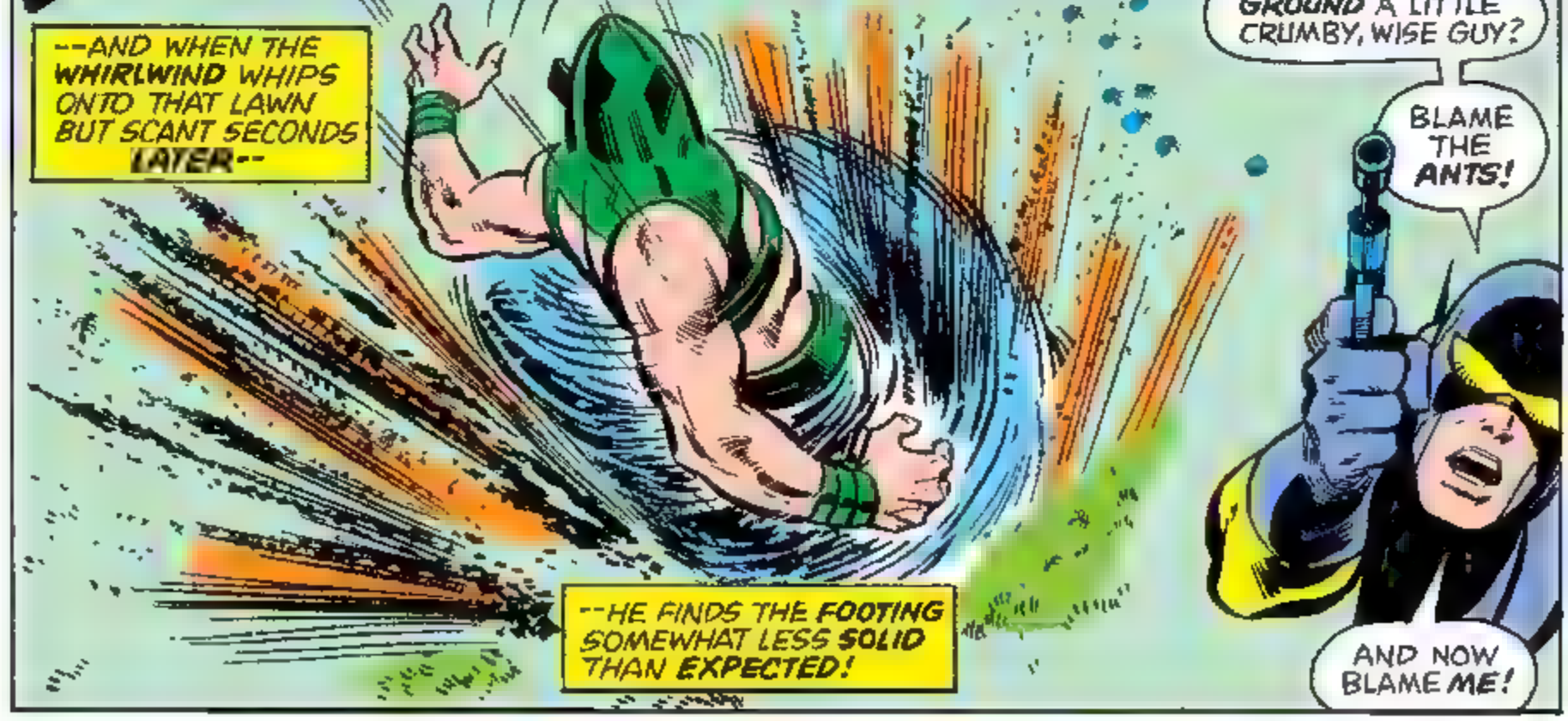

LOOK OUT, BEAST!
YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME AGAIN!
WE'LL FIND OUT ABOUT HER LATER...

...BECAUSE IT'S AN EARTH-MAN OF WHOM WE SPEAK TODAY.
HENRY PYM, A MAN OF MANY NAMES, BUT ONLY ONE TRUE LOVE. HE STANDS IN THE HOUSE OF THEIR LIFE AND LOOKS AT HER, MINUTES ON END.
"LOVE."
"JAN."

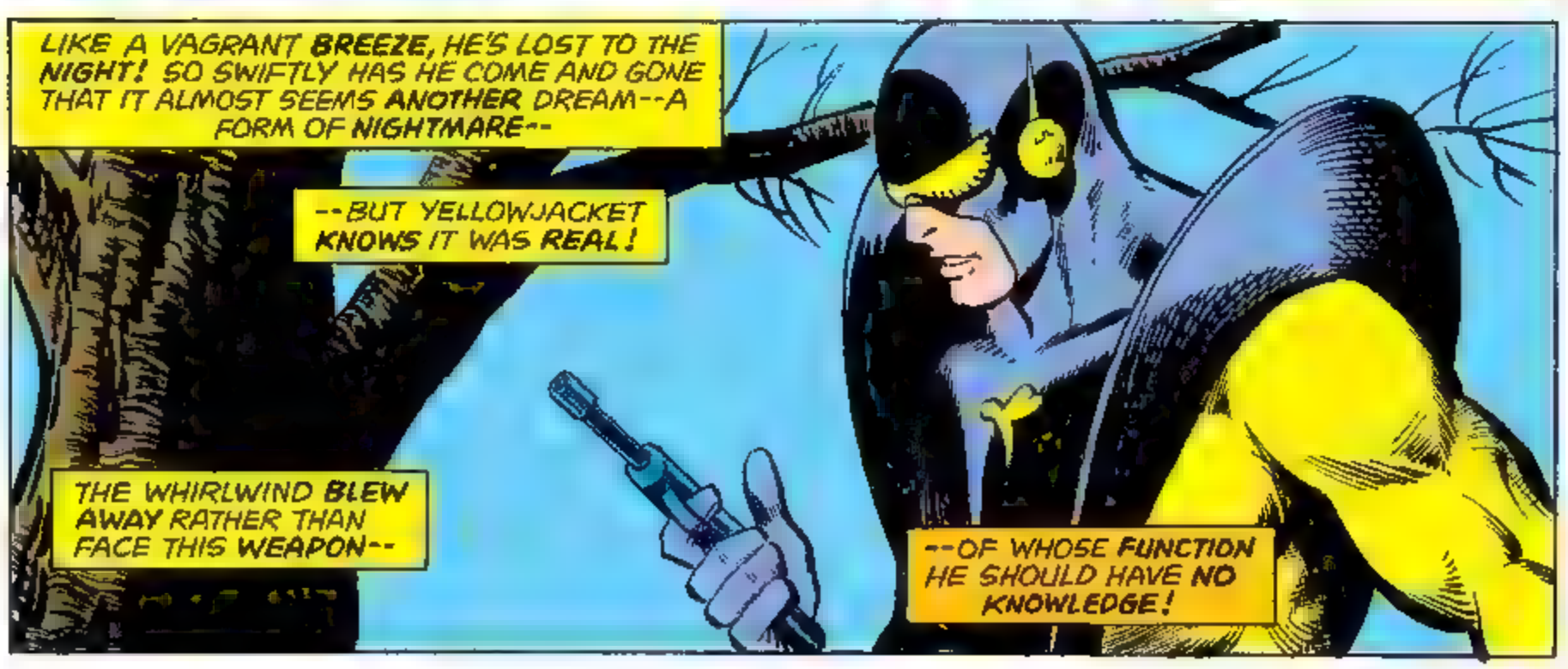

HE DRIFTS ON THE DAZE OF THE PAST, WHEN SHE LAUGHED AND LURED HIM FROM HIS SOMBRE STUDIES...
...PLAYED WITH HIS LIFE AND MADE HIM PLAY...
...AND MADE HIM THE HAPPIEST OF MEN!

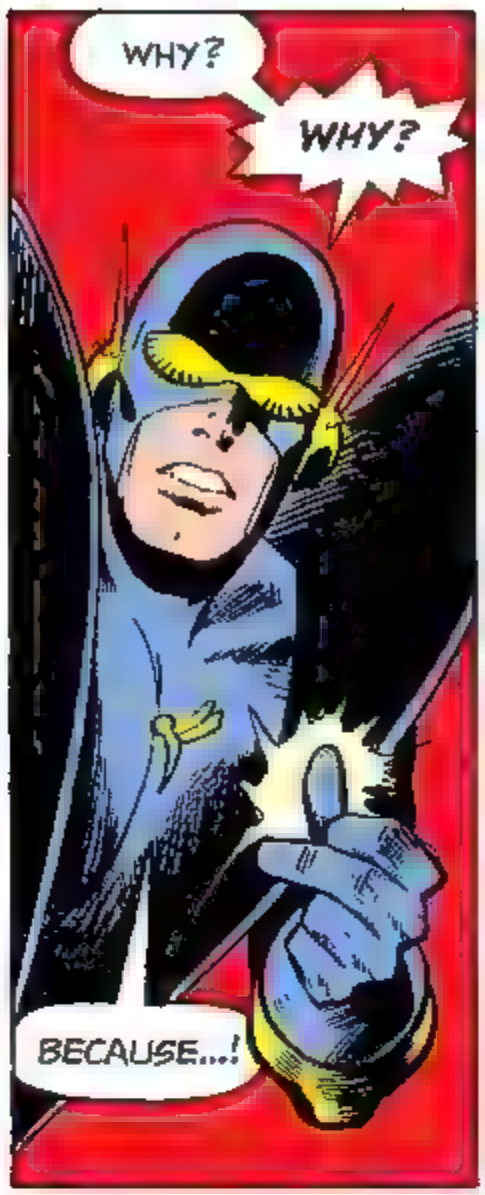
BUT SHOULD THE DREAM DIE, LURKING FURY IS THERE TO REPLACE IT!
HOWDY, YELLOWBACK!
YOUR NUMBER'S UP!
GONE IS REMEMBRANCE! NOW THERE'S ONLY ACTION, QUICK AND SURE!

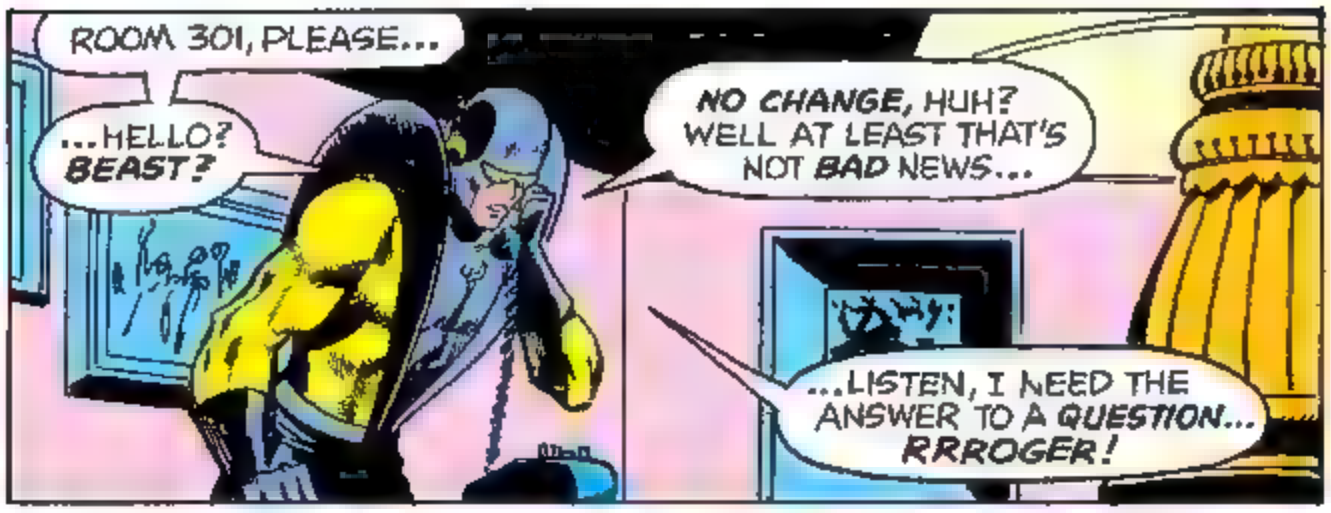
YJ LEAPS PAST THE WHIRLWIND WHERE THE INSECTS--
--HIS INSECTS--
--LIVE!
SUMMONING ALL HIS MENTAL CONTROL, HE SEEKS THE MILLION MINUTE MINDS BENEATH HIS SEEMINGLY EMPTY LAWN--


--AND WHEN THE WHIRLWIND WHIPS ONTO THAT LAWN BUT SCANT SECONDS LATER--
--HE FINDS THE FOOTING SOMEWHAT LESS SOLID THAN EXPECTED!
GROUND A LITTLE CRUMBY, WISE GUY?
BLAME THE ANTS!
AND NOW BLAME ME!

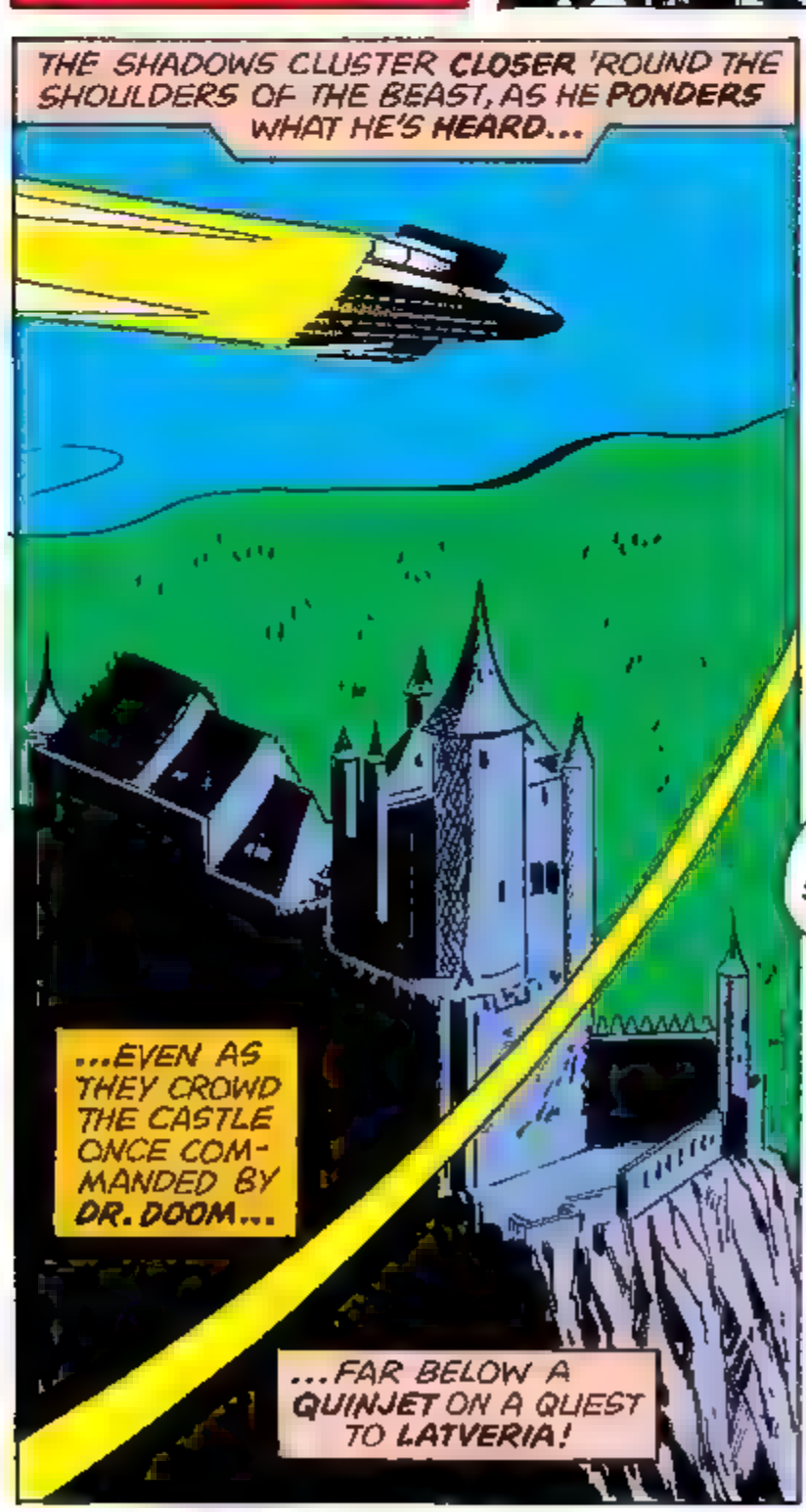
BUT THE CELLULAR-DISRUPTOR PISTOL IN HANK'S HAND NEVER LOOSES ITS BODY-BLITZING BLAST--
--BECAUSE THE WHIRLWIND SWIRLS HIMSELF BACK UP ON HIS FEET--ONLY--
--HE DOESN'T SWIRL FORWARD!
HE FLEES!


LIKE A VAGRANT BREEZE, HE'S LOST TO THE NIGHT! SO SWIFTLY HAS HE COME AND GONE THAT IT ALMOST SEEMS ANOTHER DREAM--A FORM OF NIGHTMARE--
--BUT YELLOWJACKET KNOWS IT WAS REAL!
THE WHIRLWIND BLEW AWAY RATHER THAN FACE THIS WEAPON--
--OF WHOSE FUNCTION HE SHOULD HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE!


WHY?
WHY?
BECAUSE...!

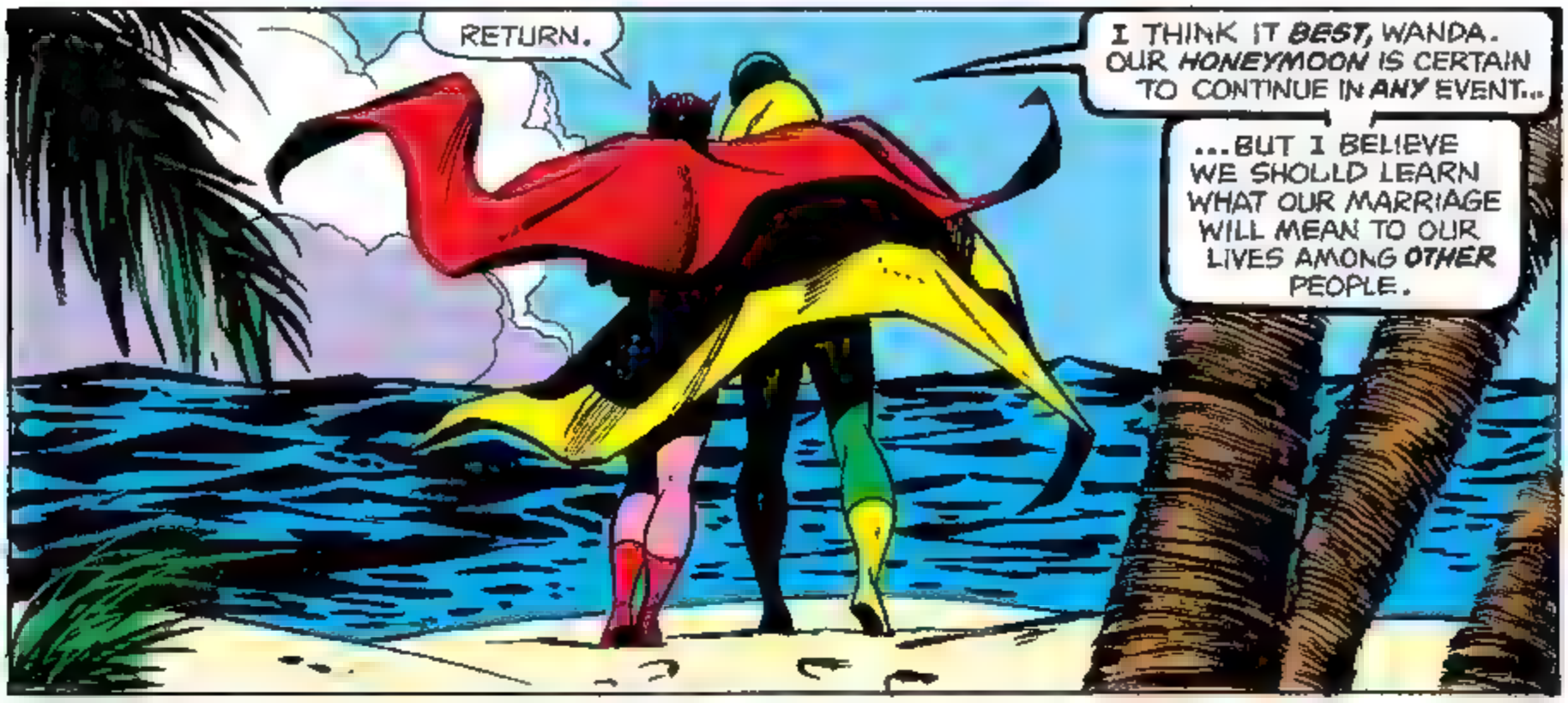

ROOM 301, PLEASE...
...HELLO? BEAST?
NO CHANGE, HUH? WELL AT LEAST THAT'S NOT BAD NEWS...
...LISTEN, I NEED THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION... RRROGER!

THAT'S AFFIRMATIVE, AVENGER!
HEY, SHOULD I COME OVER?
NO! THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO ALONE!

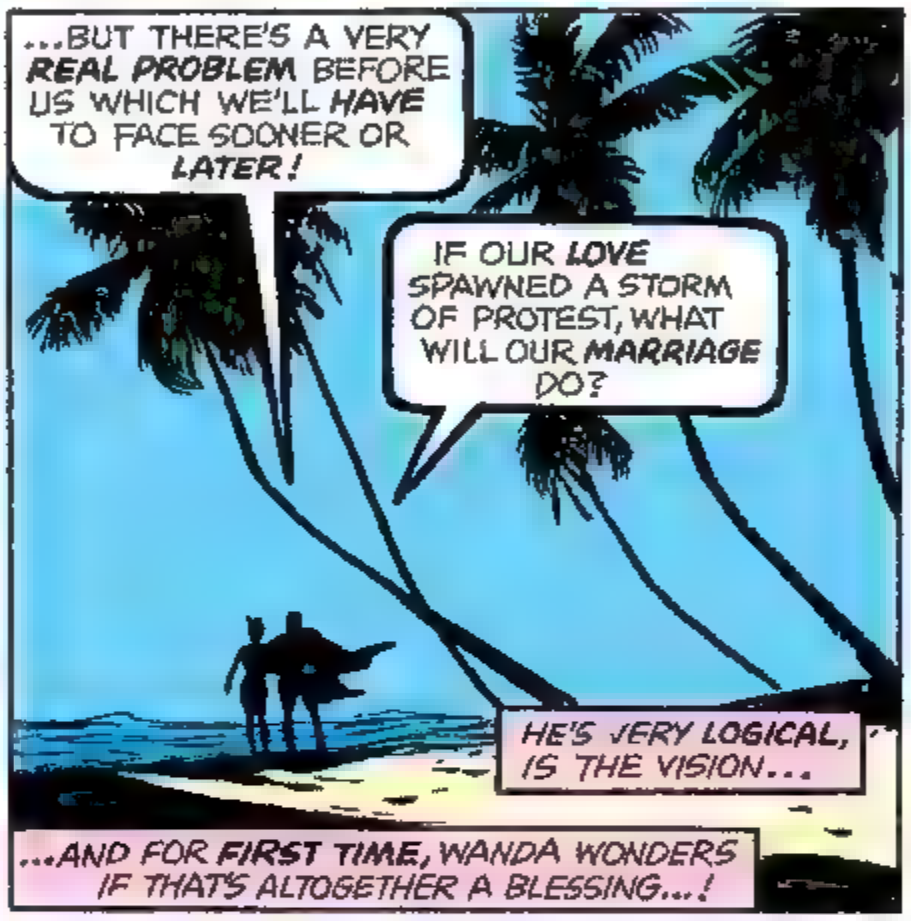

THE SHADOWS CLUSTER CLOSER 'ROUND THE SHOULDERS OF THE BEAST, AS HE PONDERS WHAT HE'S HEARD...
...EVEN AS THEY CROWD THE CASTLE ONCE COMMANDED BY DR. DOOM...
...FAR BELOW A QUINJET ON A QUEST TO LATVERIA!

THE SHIP SETTLES. TWO GRIM FIGURES DEBARK...
THEIR EMOTIONS RULED LESS BY THE FOREBODING FORTRESS THAN THE SILENT TRUCE BETWEEN THEM.
FOLLOW MY CHEST-LIGHT, PRIESTESS.
UNLESS IT'S TOO SUGGESTIVE FOR YOU!
I WASN'T HERE LAST TRIP,* BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU I'VE DONE MY HOMEWORK!
*#56.--L.

HOWEVER, WHEN THEY REACH THE ROOM WHERE DOOM HAD ABANDONED HIS TIME MACHINE...
IT ISN'T HERE!
THEN-- HAWKEYE HAS NEVER--
--RETURNED!


RETURN.
I THINK IT BEST, WANDA. OUR HONEYMOON IS CERTAIN TO CONTINUE IN ANY EVENT...
...BUT I BELIEVE WE SHOULD LEARN WHAT OUR MARRIAGE WILL MEAN TO OUR LIVES AMONG OTHER PEOPLE.

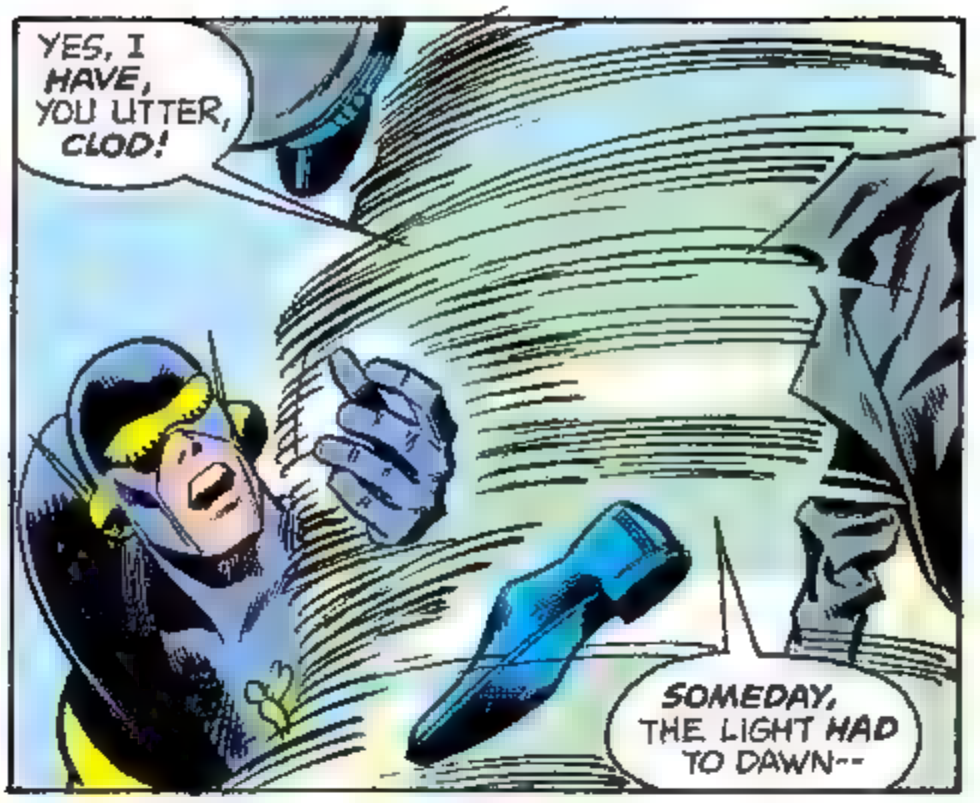
I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT US CONTINUING, DARK EYES-- BUT DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE A LITTLE BIT LONGER RIGHT HERE?
YOU KNOW I'D LIKE THAT, TOO, WANDA...


...BUT THERE'S A VERY REAL PROBLEM BEFORE US WHICH WE'LL HAVE TO FACE SOONER OR LATER!
IF OUR LOVE SPAWNED A STORM OF PROTEST, WHAT WILL OUR MARRIAGE DO?
HE'S VERY LOGICAL, IS THE VISION...
...AND FOR FIRST TIME, WANDA WONDERS IF THAT'S ALTOGETHER A BLESSING...!

NOW, HOWEVER, IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO ZERO IN ON THE MAN WHO BEGAN OUR TANGLED TALE: YELLOWJACKET!
HMM...WE THOUGHT HE'D BE SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE...!
--THE FI-YER'S JOE, AND THEY CALL THE WIND-MA-RI-A!

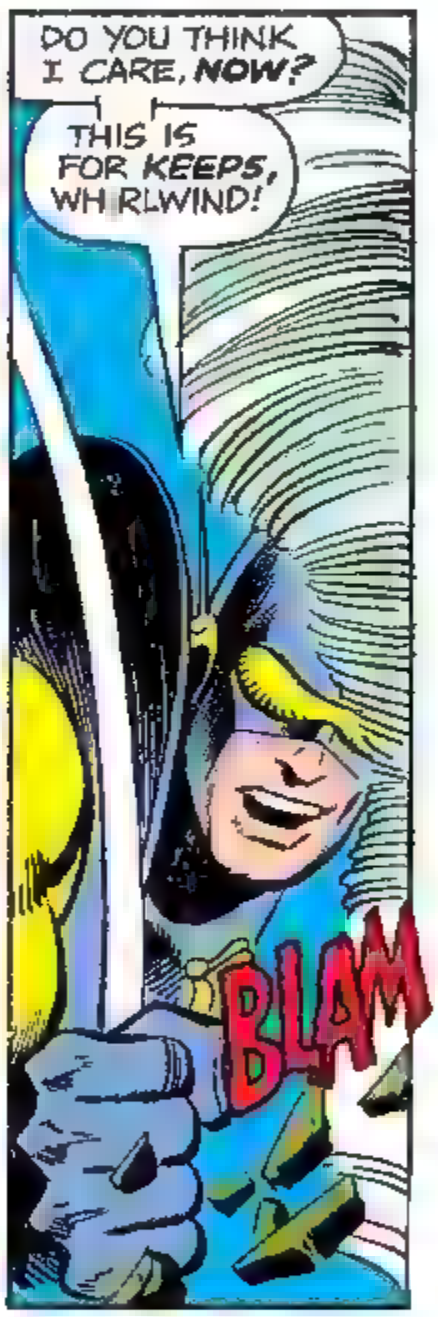
WHY-- DR. PYM!
OH, THERE HE IS!
WHAT ARE YOU--
CAN'T YOU GUESS, CHARLES?

IT'S TAKEN ME YEARS TO LIFT MY NOSE OFF THE GRINDSTONE AND LOOK BEYOND IT--
--BUT TONIGHT, WHIRLWIND RAN FROM A WEAPON VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE EVER SEEN!
YOU'VE SEEN IT, CHARLES!


YES, I HAVE, YOU UTTER, CLOD!
SOMEDAY, THE LIGHT HAD TO DAWN--

--BUT I NEVER WOULD'VE SUPPOSED IT WOULD TAKE THE LIGHT YEARS!
YOU REALLY ARE A FOOL, PH. D.--
--WHILE THE WHIRLWIND IS A W--

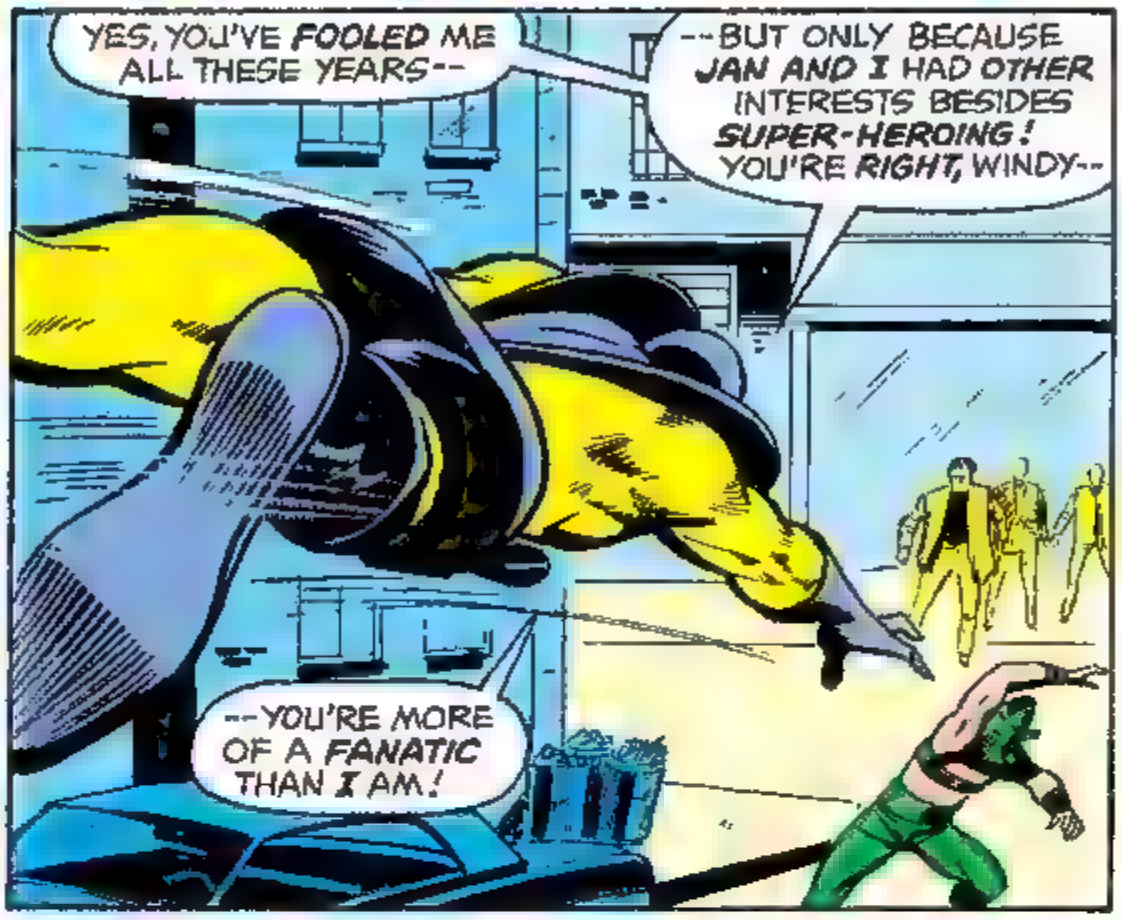
OH, STUFF IT!!
YOU--YOU'RE GROWING!
YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO DO THAT!


DO YOU THINK I CARE, NOW?
THIS IS FOR KEEPS, WHIRLWIND!
BLAM

HA! MISSED!
I'M GOING TO DO ANYTHING I HAVE TO--
--TO MAKE YOU PAY!

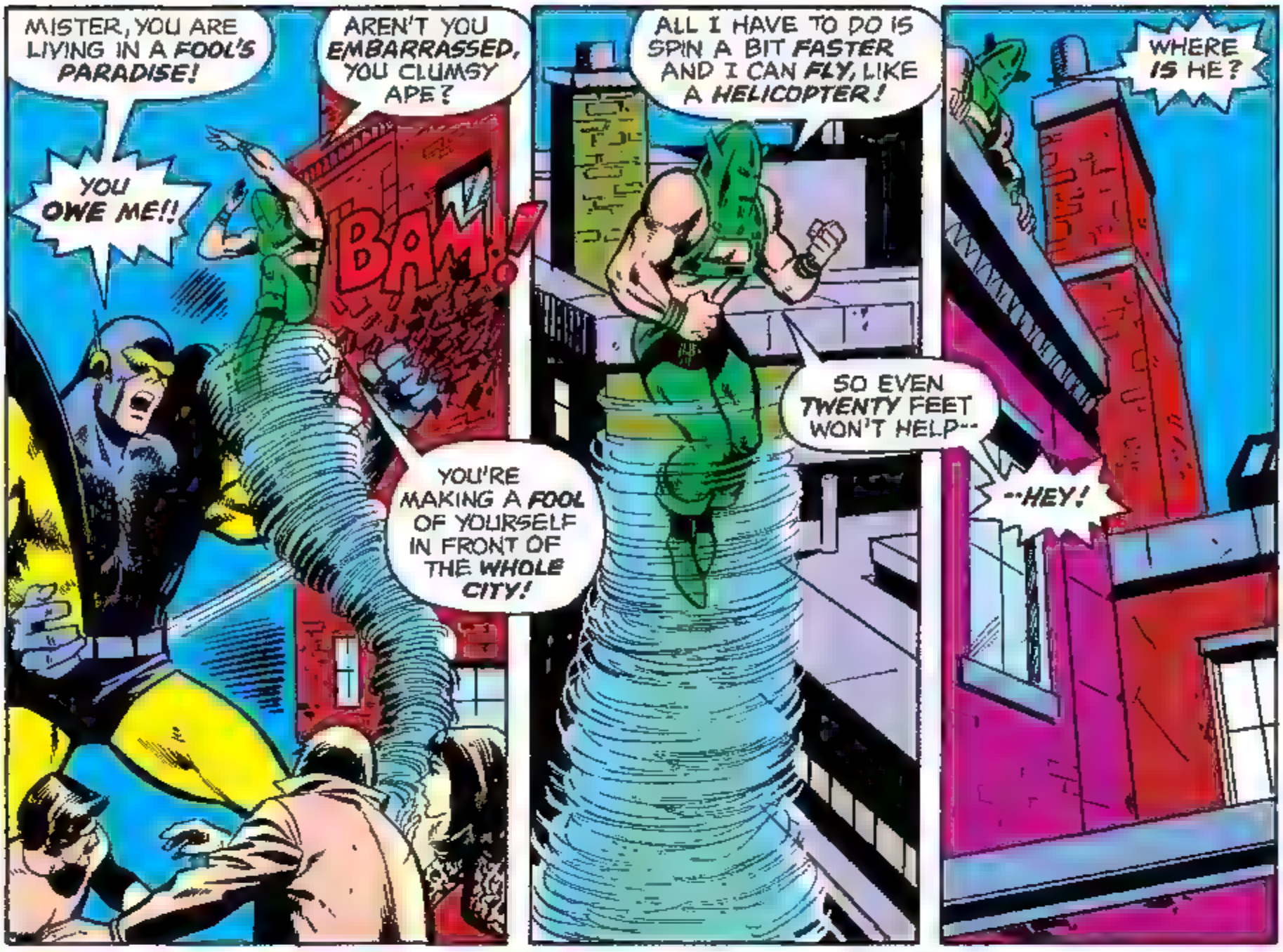
YOU'VE BEEN SAYING THAT SINCE I WAS THE HUMAN TOP!
LOOK, STRETCH--
--I'M STILL TOO FAST FOR YOU, AT SIX FEET OR SIXTY--
--AND THAT'S THE NAME OF THIS GAME!

TWENTY FEET, WHIRL-WIND--
--AND THE HUMAN TOP NEVER OUT-LASTED GIANT-MAN!

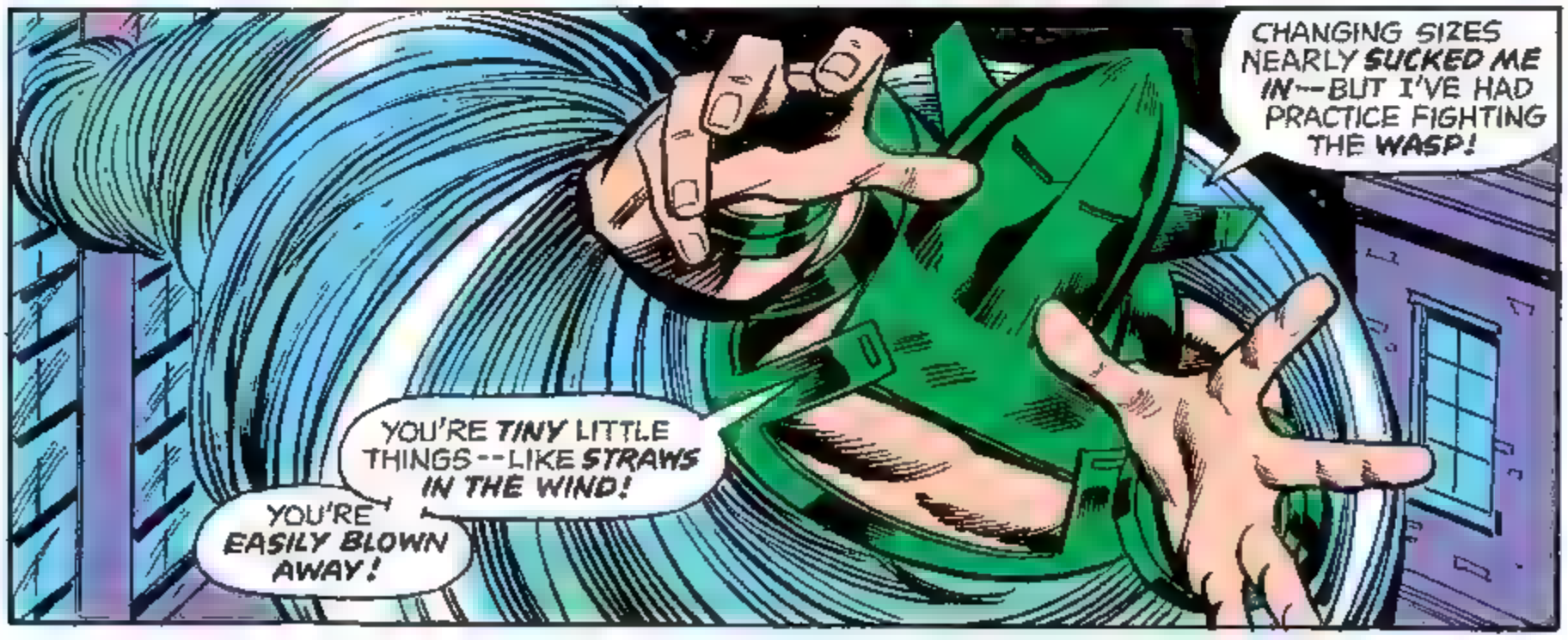

YES, YOU'VE FOOLED ME ALL THESE YEARS--
--BUT ONLY BECAUSE JAN AND I HAD OTHER INTERESTS BESIDES SUPER-HEROING! YOU'RE RIGHT, WINDY--
--YOU'RE MORE OF A FANATIC THAN I AM!

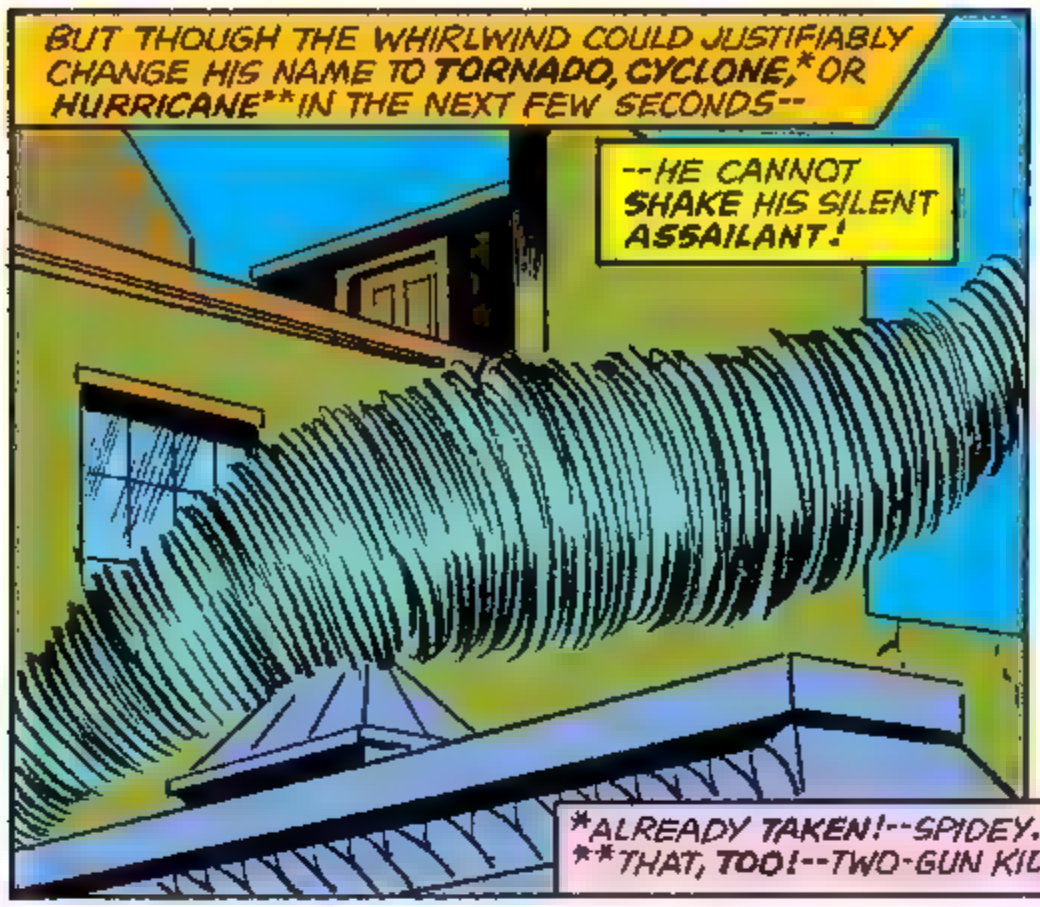
LOOK, MAN, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN GET A HOLD ON ME!
NO WAY!
BLANG!

YOU CAN CALL ME ALL THE NAMES YOU WANT, BUT YOU'RE FRESH OUT OF STICKS AND STONES!
YOUR REACH EXCEEDS YOUR GRASP-- GET ME?
YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!

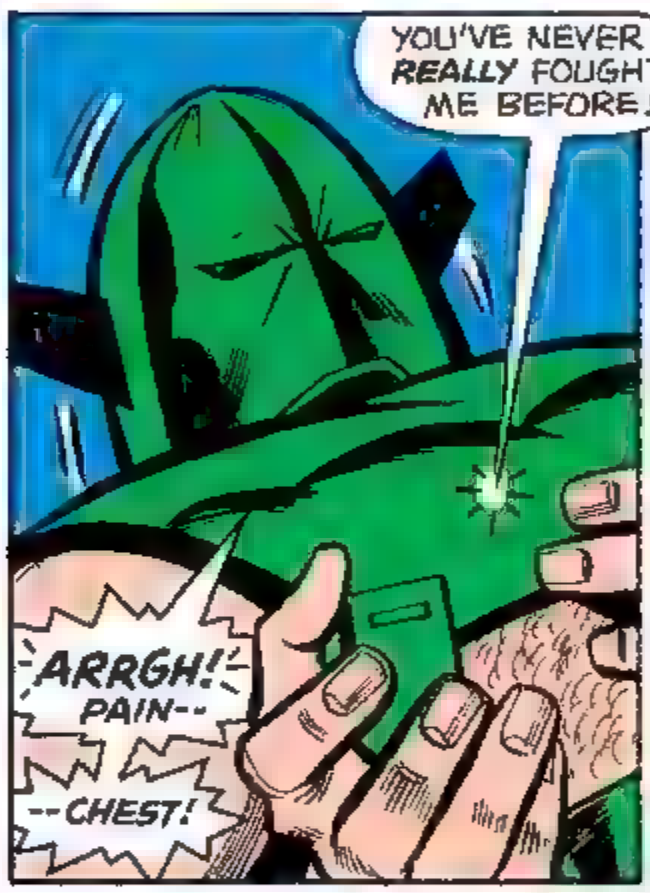

MISTER, YOU ARE LIVING IN A FOOL'S PARADISE!
YOU OWE ME!!
AREN'T YOU EMBARRASSED, YOU CLUMSY APE?
BAM!
YOU'RE MAKING A FOOL OF YOURSELF IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE CITY!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SPIN A BIT FASTER AND I CAN FLY, LIKE A HELICOPTER!
SO EVEN TWENTY FEET WON'T HELP--
WHERE IS HE?
--HEY!

MOST MEN WOULD BE STOPPED RIGHT THERE, UNABLE TO PERCEIVE THEIR IMMINENT PERIL--BUT THE WHIRLWIND IS USED TO SEEING IN ALL DIRECTIONS!
EVEN AT THAT, HE IS ALMOST TOO LATE!
ANT-MAN-- LANDING ON MY CHESTPLATE!
PRETTY SMART!

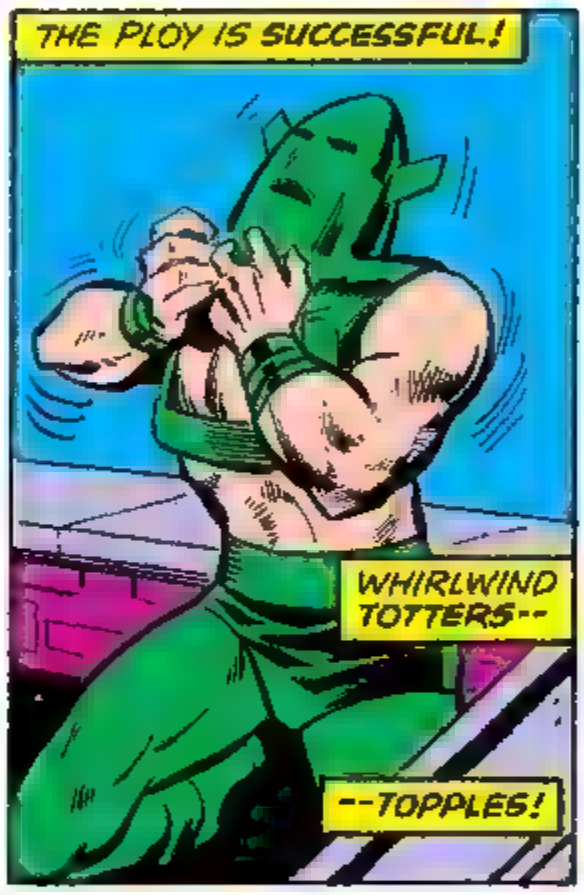

CHANGING SIZES NEARLY SUCKED ME IN--BUT I'VE HAD PRACTICE FIGHTING THE WASP!
YOU'RE TINY LITTLE THINGS--LIKE STRAWS IN THE WIND!
YOU'RE EASILY BLOWN AWAY!

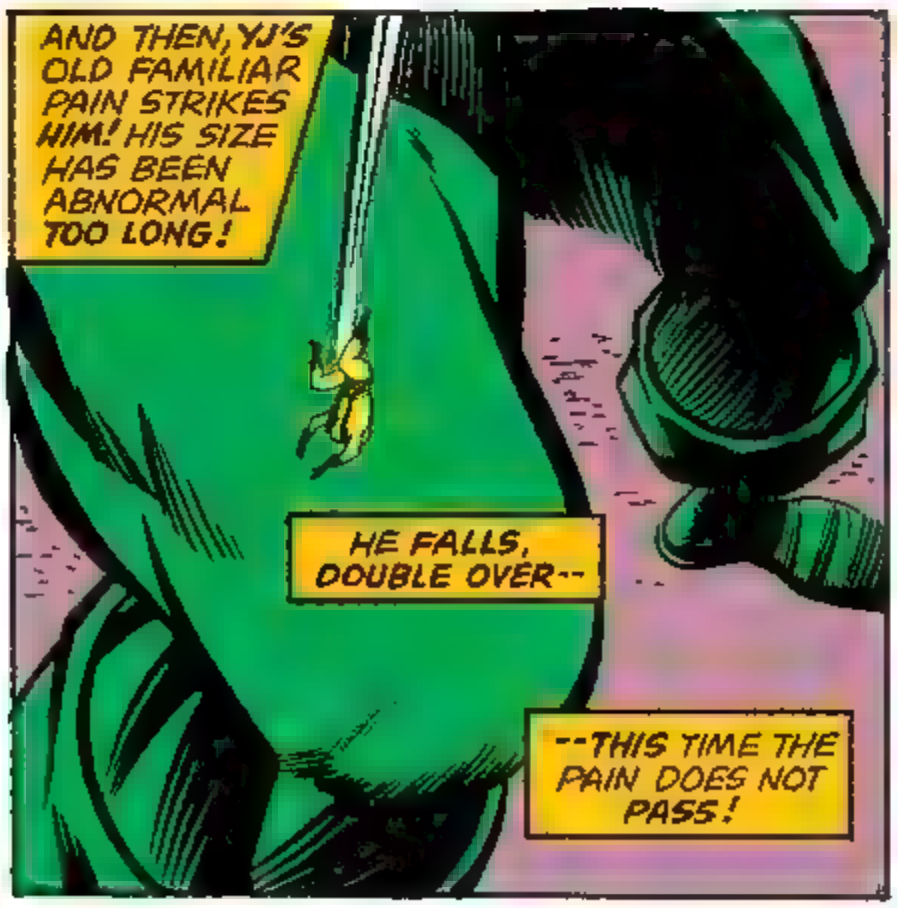

BUT THOUGH THE WHIRLWIND COULD JUSTIFIABLY CHANGE HIS NAME TO TORNADO, CYCLONE,* OR HURRICANE** IN THE NEXT FEW SECONDS--
--HE CANNOT SHAKE HIS SILENT ASSAILANT!
*ALREADY TAKEN!--SPIDEY.
**THAT, TOO!--TWO-GUN KID.

THE ANT-SIZED AVENGER HAD FOUND SHELTER 'NEATH THE SPINNING CHEST-PLATE BEFORE HE COULD BE UPROOTED!
I'M COMING FOR YOU, WHIRLWIND! AND BY THE WAY--
--THE NAME'S NOT ANT-MAN! IT'S STILL YELLOWJACKET!


YOU'VE NEVER REALLY FOUGHT ME BEFORE!
ARRGH! PAIN--
--CHEST!

YELLOWJACKET HAS A SET OF STINGERS IN HIS PALMS, PAL!
THEY DON'T FEEL SO GOOD FULL FORCE, DO THEY?


THE PLOY IS SUCCESSFUL!
WHIRLWIND TOTTERS--
--TOPPLES!


AND THEN, YJ'S OLD FAMILIAR PAIN STRIKES HIM! HIS SIZE HAS BEEN ABNORMAL TOO LONG!
HE FALLS, DOUBLE OVER--
--THIS TIME THE PAIN DOES NOT PASS!

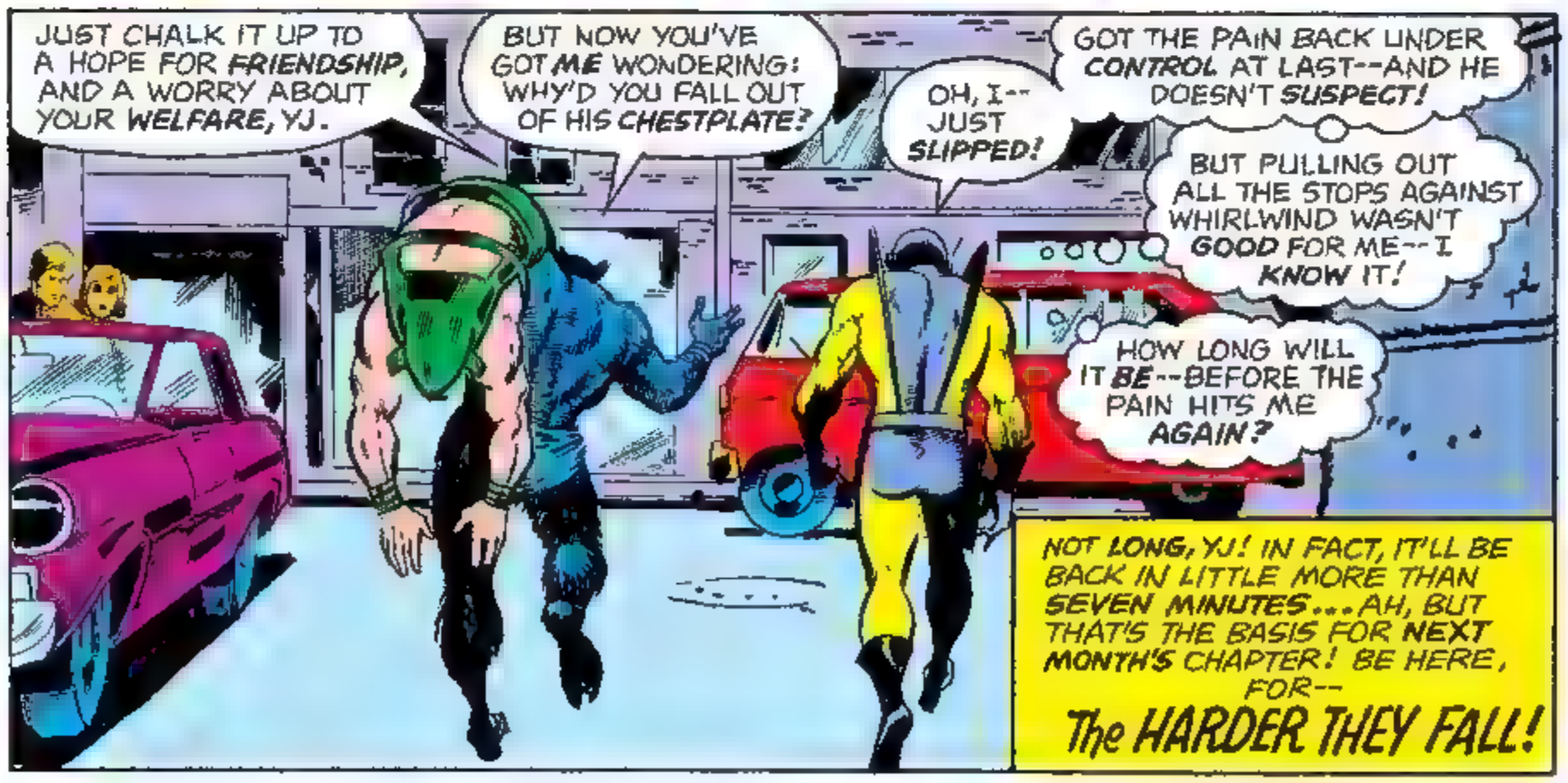
HAZILY, HE LOOKS BACK!
YOU LITTLE CREEP! THIS IS IT!

BONG!

SORRY, WHIRLY--THAT WAS NO DOUBT, DIRTY POOL!
BUT EVEN THOUGH YJ LETS HIS FEELINGS GET THE BETTER OF HIM SOMETIMES, I COULD HARDLY LET YOU CONTINUE!

BEAST! DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM HERE?
YOU DID!

BUT AS SAMUEL COLLINS SAID IN THE 1943 SUPERMAN NEWSPAPER STRIP--
--NEVER MIND ME. ATTEND TO THAT ARCH FIEND!


JUST CHALK IT UP TO A HOPE FOR FRIENDSHIP, AND A WORRY ABOUT YOUR WELFARE, YJ.
BUT NOW YOU'VE GOT ME WONDERING: WHY'D YOU FALL OUT OF HIS CHESTPLATE?
OH, I-- JUST SLIPPED!
GOT THE PAIN BACK UNDER CONTROL AT LAST--AND HE DOESN'T SUSPECT!
BUT PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS AGAINST WHIRLWIND WASN'T GOOD FOR ME--I KNOW IT!
HOW LONG WILL IT BE--BEFORE THE PAIN HITS ME AGAIN?
NOT LONG, YJ! IN FACT, IT'LL BE BACK IN LITTLE MORE THAN SEVEN MINUTES...AH, BUT THAT'S THE BASIS FOR NEXT MONTH'S CHAPTER! BE HERE, FOR--
The HARDER THEY FALL!

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
HERE'S THE ANTIDOTE, VISION!
BETTER GET IT INTO YELLOWJACKET-- FAST!
I'M ON MY WAY, BEAST-- BUT I FEAR OUR COMRADE IS ALREADY DOOMED!
INVASION OF THE 50-FOOT HERO!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!** ™

STEVE ENGLEHART STORY / GEORGE TUSKA SCENERY / V. COLLETTA INKER / C. JETTER LETTERER / PETRA G. COLORIST / MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR

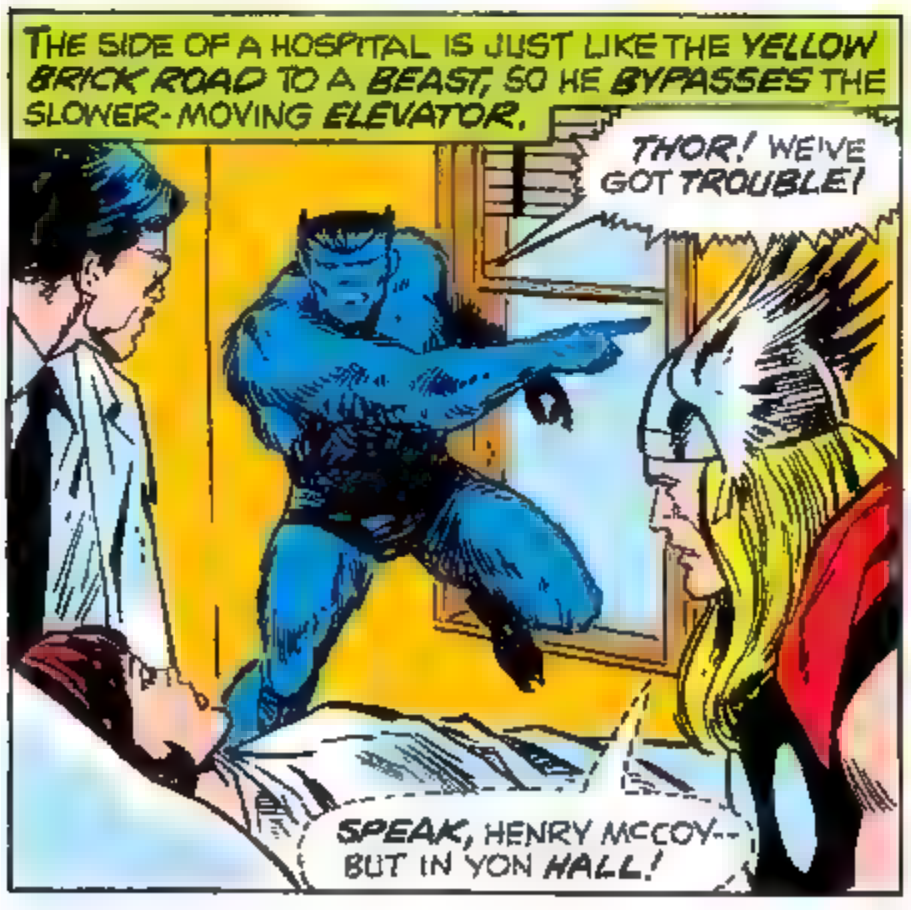
A JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE ANT

OH MY STARS AND GARTERS! HE COLLAPSED!
WHAT'S WRONG, BUDDY? DID WHIRLY GET IN A PUNCH YOU DIDN'T TELL ME ABOUT?
HANK?

HE'S COMPLETELY ZONKED! I NEVER--
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! ARE MY BEADY EYES BEGGIN' FOR BIFOCALS--
--OR IS HE GROWING?

HE IS! THE WASP WARNED US HE WASN'T TO DO ANY SIZE-CHANGING THESE DAYS--
--NOT WITH THE MICROBE THAT TRAPPED HIM AT ANT-SIZE* STILL IN HIS BLOOD!
* MARVEL FEATURE #4.--MARV.

SHE SAID IT MIGHT ACT UP ON HIM AGAIN IF HE AGGRAVATED IT--BUT HE WANTED TO HIT SOMEBODY SO BAD--!
AND THERE HE WAS, TELLING ME HE WAS OKAY!


THE SIDE OF A HOSPITAL IS JUST LIKE THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO A BEAST, SO HE BYPASSES THE SLOWER-MOVING ELEVATOR.
THOR! WE'VE GOT TROUBLE!
SPEAK, HENRY McCOY--BUT IN YON HALL!

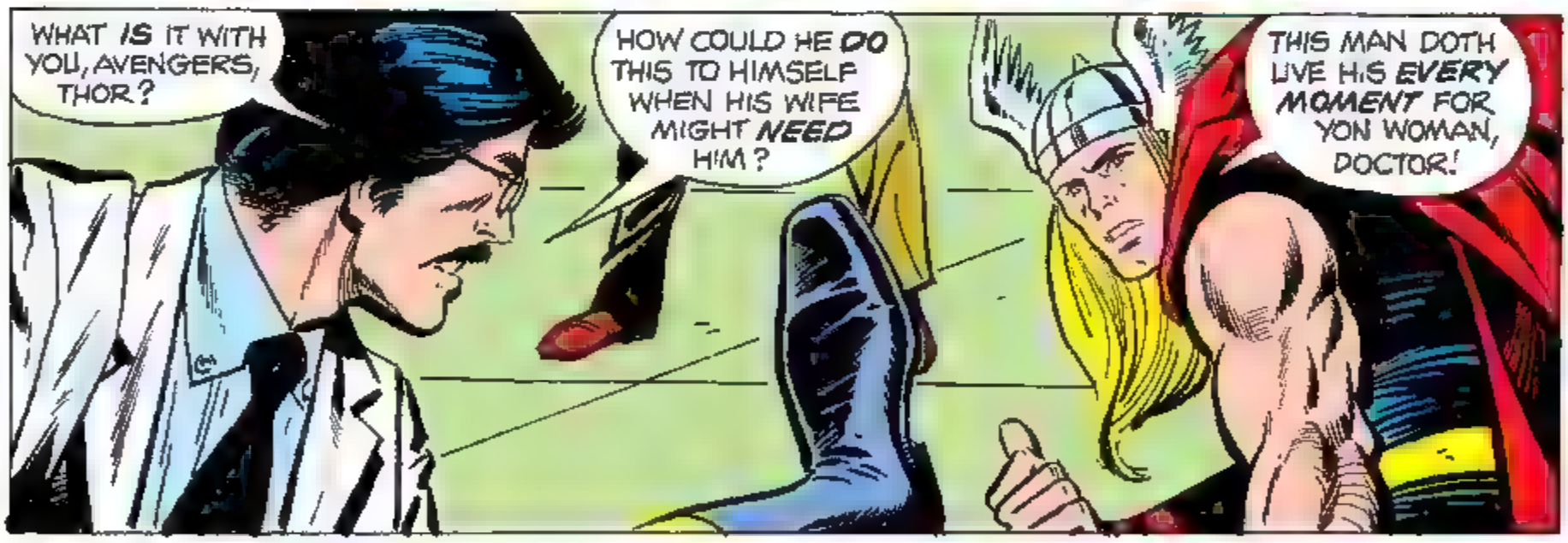
THOUGH I'VE DONE ALL AN IMMORTAL OF ASGARD MAY DO THIS DAY, THE CONDITION OF JANET PYM DOTH REMAIN UNCHANGED!
SHE MUST NOT SUFFER DISTURBANCE!
THEN SHE'LL BE THE ONLY ONE ON HER BLOCK, THUNDER GOD!
COME WITH ME!

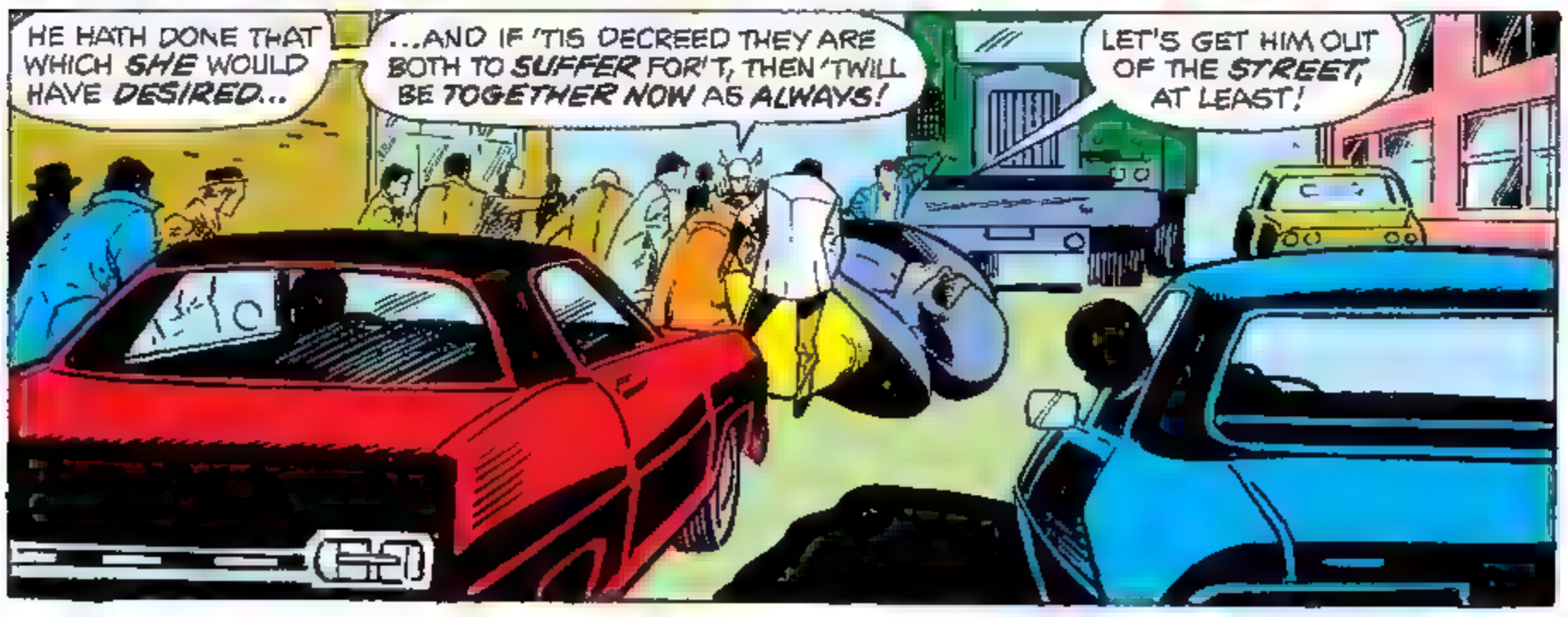
AND THE AVENGERS' NEWEST APPLICANT FILLS THOR IN ON WHAT'S *GONE DOWN* SINCE YJ *WALKED OUT* ON THEM LAST ISH...

...BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T *PREPARE* THE GODLING!

ODIN'S BLOOD! WHAT HAVE THE FATES HERE WROUGHT?

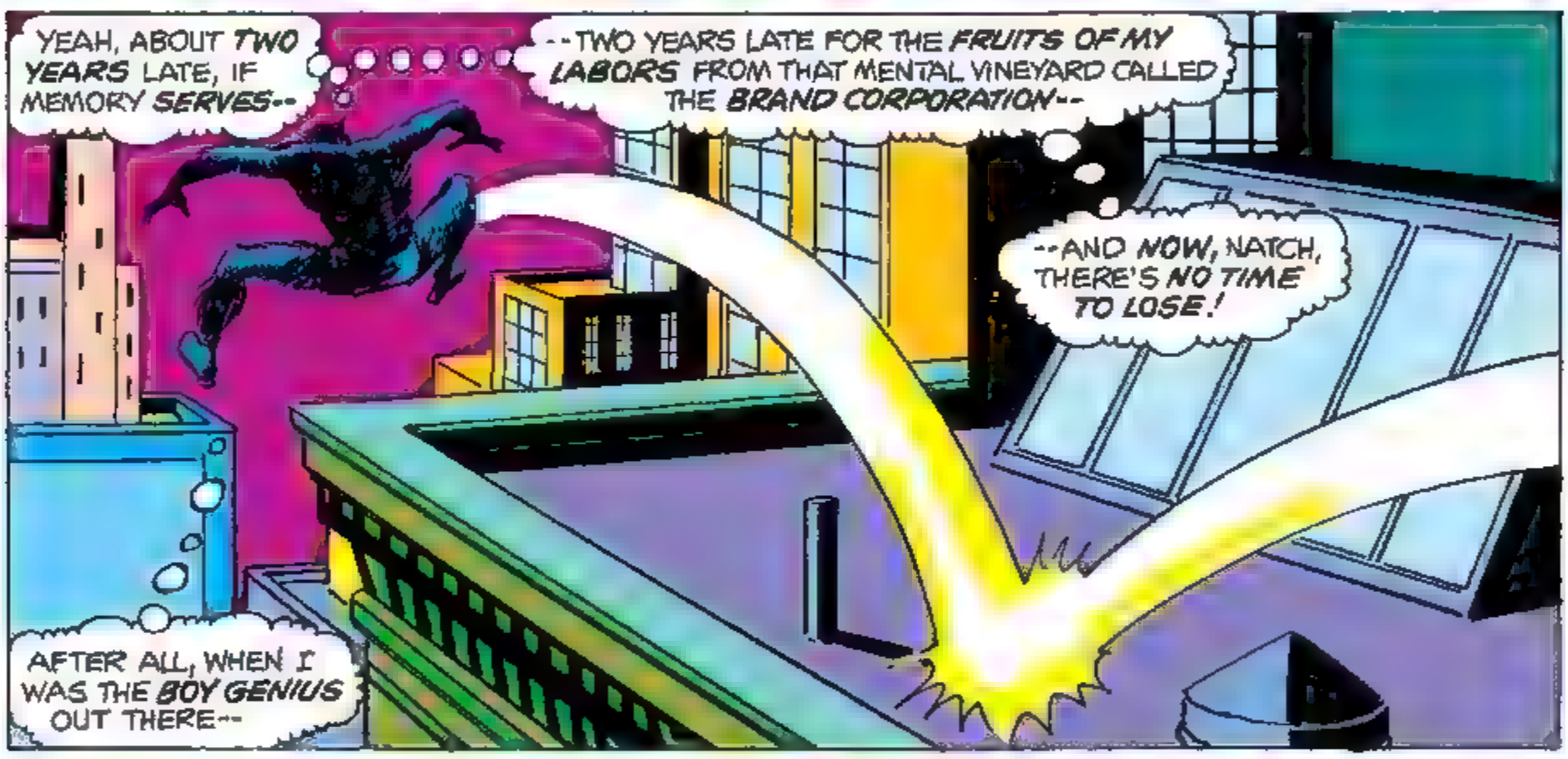
WOOF! HE'S SHOT UP TO *20 FEET* ALREADY-- IN JUST THE FEW MINUTES I WAS *GONE!*





I SAY THEE NAY, DOCTOR! HE DOTH GROW EVEN AS WE SPEAK! HE WOULD SOON FILL ANY ENCLOSURE!
HEY!

HEY! HEY!
HEY!
BEAST! WHITHER GOEST THOU?
CAN'T STOP NOW, T.G.! JUST HOLD THE FORT!
I'M LATE, I'M LATE, FOR A VERY IMPORTANT WHATEVER!


YEAH, ABOUT TWO YEARS LATE, IF MEMORY SERVES--
--TWO YEARS LATE FOR THE FRUITS OF MY LABORS FROM THAT MENTAL VINEYARD CALLED THE BRAND CORPORATION--
--AND NOW, NATCH, THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE!
AFTER ALL, WHEN I WAS THE BOY GENIUS OUT THERE--

"--I WAS WORKING ON A CURE-ALL FOR MUTATION!
"OF COURSE, THERE IS ONE LITTLE HITCH...!
...SO WITH MY URGENT PERSONAL BUSINESS IN CANADA, MR. GRANT,* I'LL NEED A WEEK OFF.
WHY, HANK, WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT FOR YOU!
* SEE AMAZING ADVENTURES #16 & HULK #161.-- MUTANT 'MEMBERIN' MARV.

IN FACT, WHAT WITH ALL THE MYSTERIOUS LEAVES OF ABSENCE YOU'VE TAKEN SINCE WE HIRED YOU--
--WE CAN LET YOU OFF FOREVER...

"WELL, YES, I GUESS I WAS A LITTLE BIT LESS THAN THRILLED!

BAM!

NOW THAT'S NOT FAIR! I'VE HAD GOOD EXCUSES EVERY TIME--

--AND IT HASN'T CUT THE QUALITY OF MY WORK FOR YOU!

THAT'S TRUE, HANK--

--AND WE THANK YOU FOR IT, BECAUSE IF YOU READ YOUR CONTRACT--

--ALL THE RESULTS OF YOUR WORK BELONG TO US!

"IT WASN'T WHAT YOU'D CALL A DIGNIFIED EXIT..."

...BUT I HADN'T COME TO TERMS WITH MY BUDDING BEASTHOOD BACK THEN! I STILL CARRIED A LOT OF FRUSTRATION INSIDE ME--

--JUST LIKE THE OTHER HANK ON MY NEW TEAM!

OKAY! HERE WE ARE...!

..TIME TO BREAK OUT MY OLD "BREAK IN AT THE BRAND CORP." ROUTINE!

FURTIVE!

HMMM...I NEVER WAS TOO GOOD AT THAT ROUTINE!

WHAT WAS THAT?

IN FACT, EVERY TIME I TRIED IT, I MANAGED TO GET MYSELF SHOT AT, NOW THAT I THINK OF IT!

IF I'M GOING TO GET MY EXPERIMENTAL FORMULA OUT OF THIS PLACE--

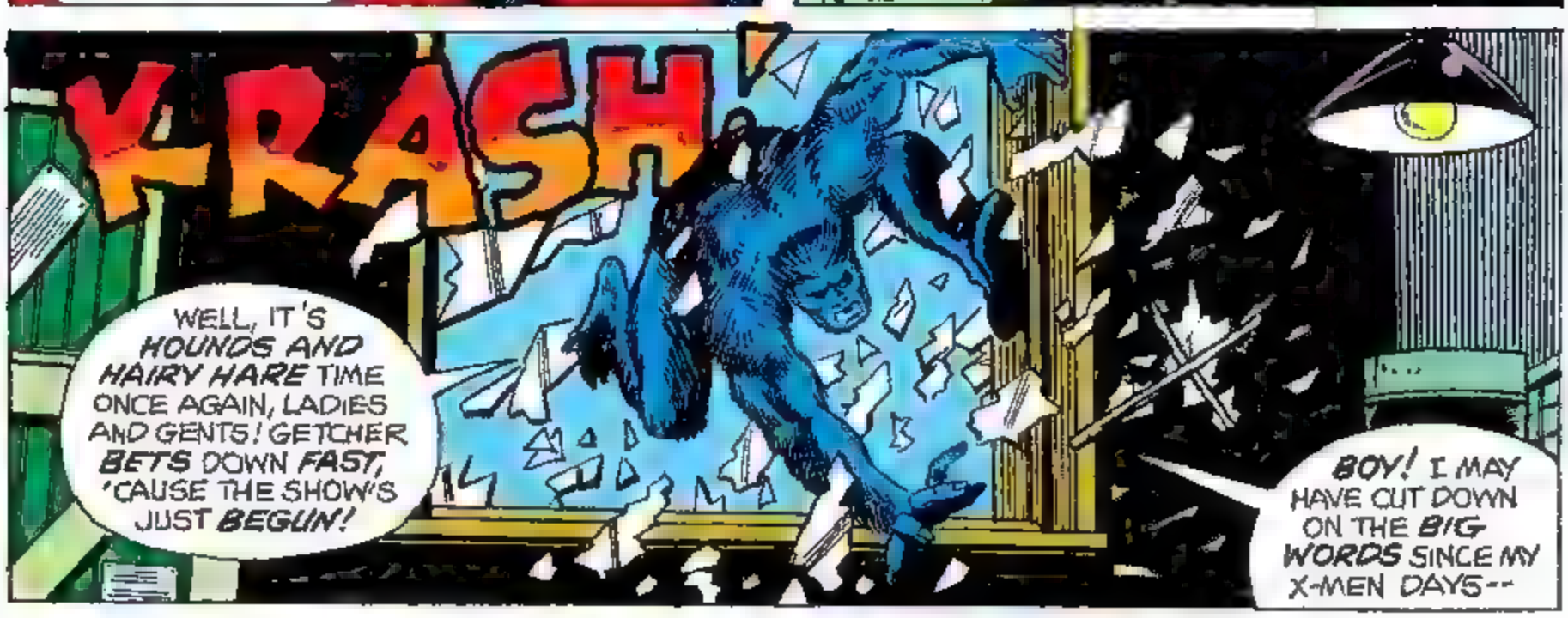
--I'LL HAVE TO CLEAN UP MY ACT! AFTER ALL, EVEN WITH MY FAST-HEALING METABOLISM.

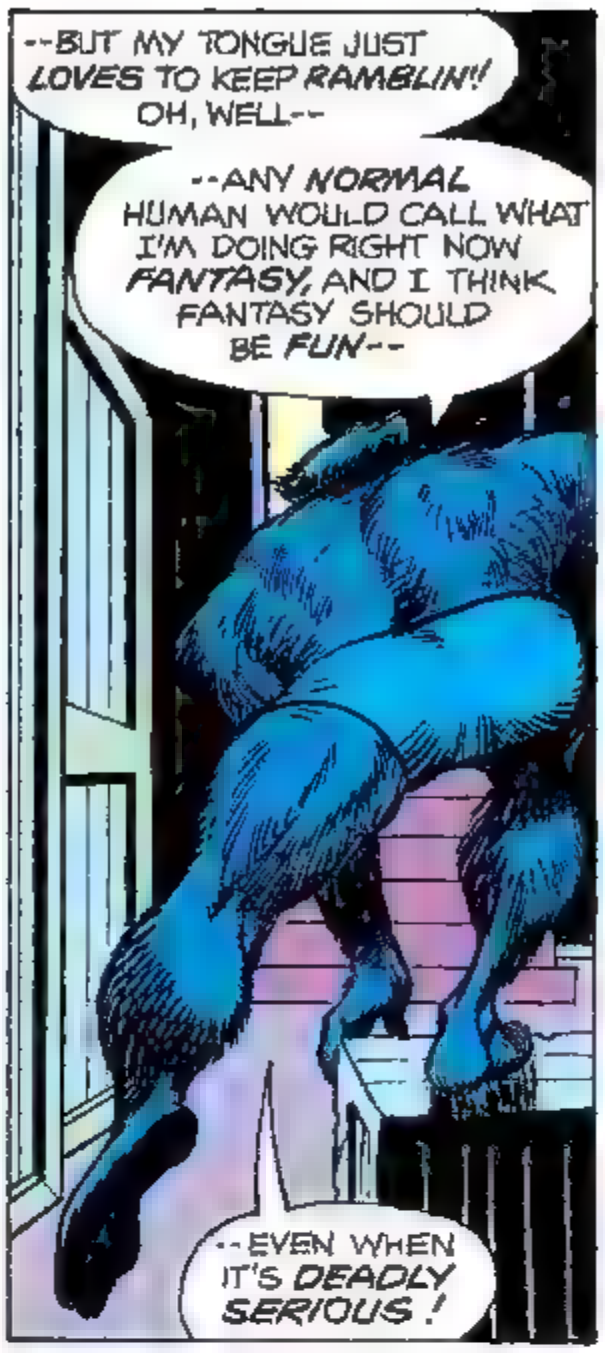
...I WOULDN'T WANT TO GET SH--
OH, SHOOT!
THIS GUARD SHACK WASN'T HERE TWO YEARS AGO!
GOOD LORD! THAT'S THE BEAST!

NOW LOOK, GUARD--I'M AN AVENGER--
--OR RATHER, I'M TRYING OUT TO BE--
YEAH, SURE! AN' I'M TRYIN' OUT FOR PETER PAN IN THE COMPANY PLAY!
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU, MONSTER, AND I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD YOU SAY!

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T!
WOMP!
BUT THIS REALLY IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH--

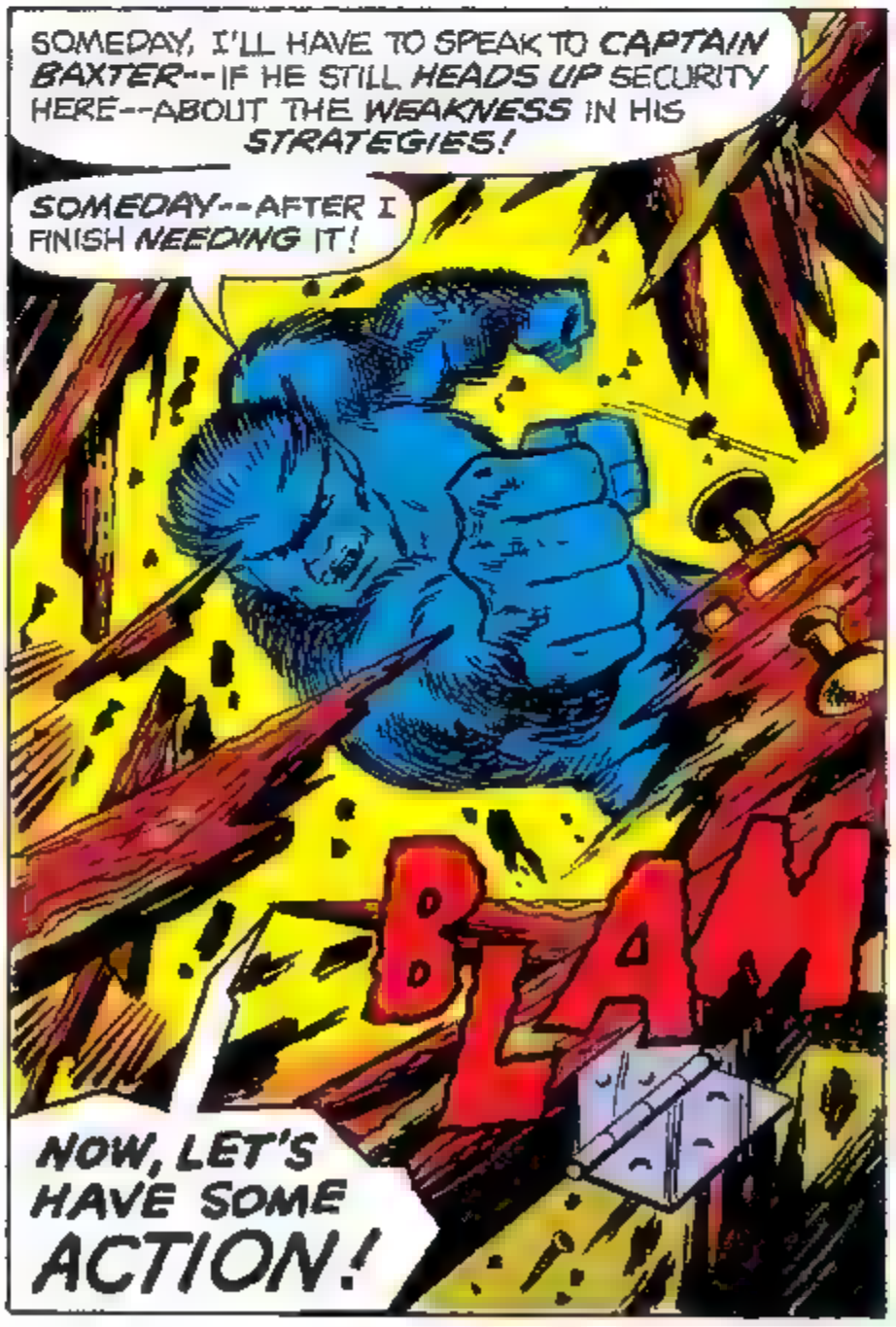
KRAK!
KRAK!
--SO ADIOS, CHICKENPLUCKERS!
I HOPE YOU GET THE PART!


KRASH!
WELL, IT'S HOUNDS AND HAIRY HARE TIME ONCE AGAIN, LADIES AND GENTS! GETCHER BETS DOWN FAST, 'CAUSE THE SHOW'S JUST BEGUN!
BOY! I MAY HAVE CUT DOWN ON THE BIG WORDS SINCE MY X-MEN DAYS--

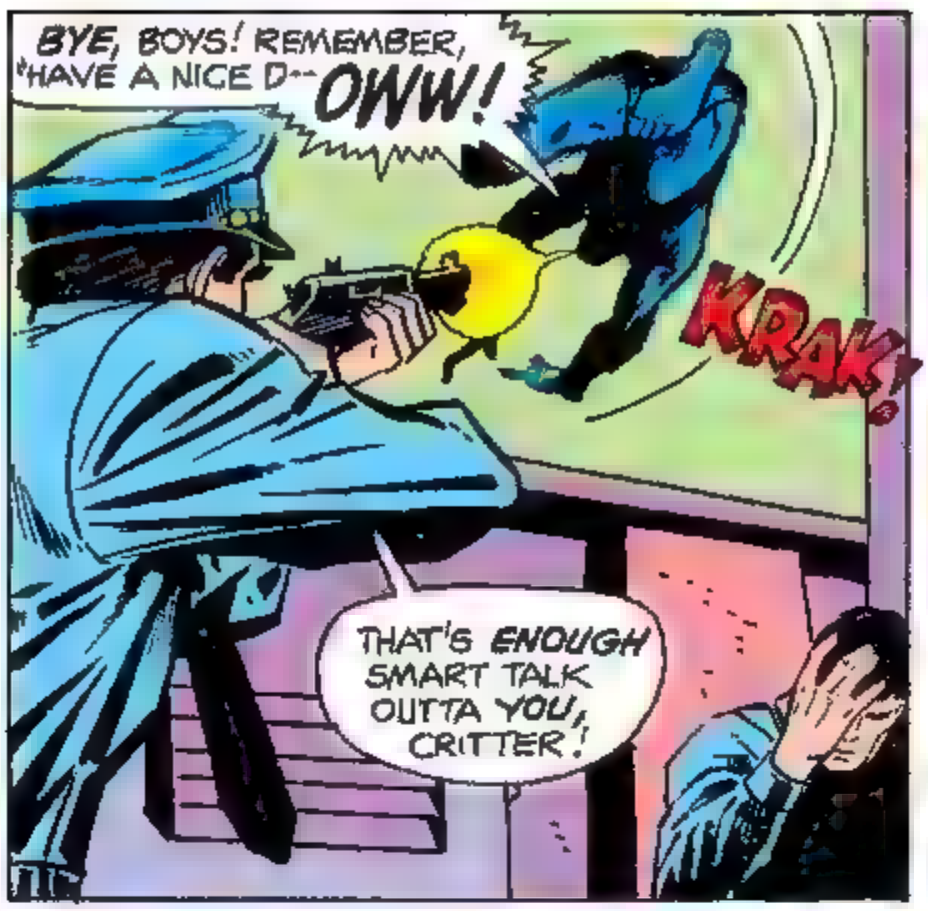

--BUT MY TONGUE JUST LOVES TO KEEP RAMBLIN'! OH, WELL--
--ANY NORMAL HUMAN WOULD CALL WHAT I'M DOING RIGHT NOW FANTASY, AND I THINK FANTASY SHOULD BE FUN--
--EVEN WHEN IT'S DEADLY SERIOUS!

WHEW! THEY'VE DONE A LOT OF REMODELING AROUND HERE! STILL, I THINK MY OLD LAB--
--"TOP SECRET ONLY"--
--IS OFF TO THE LEFT!
IT WOULD NEVER DO TO GET LOST AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME!

BUT NO! EUREKA! I HAVE FOUND IT!
AND JUST LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS, THEY'RE LAX WITH THEIR IN-HOUSE SECURITY!
I'VE GOT THE SERUM!

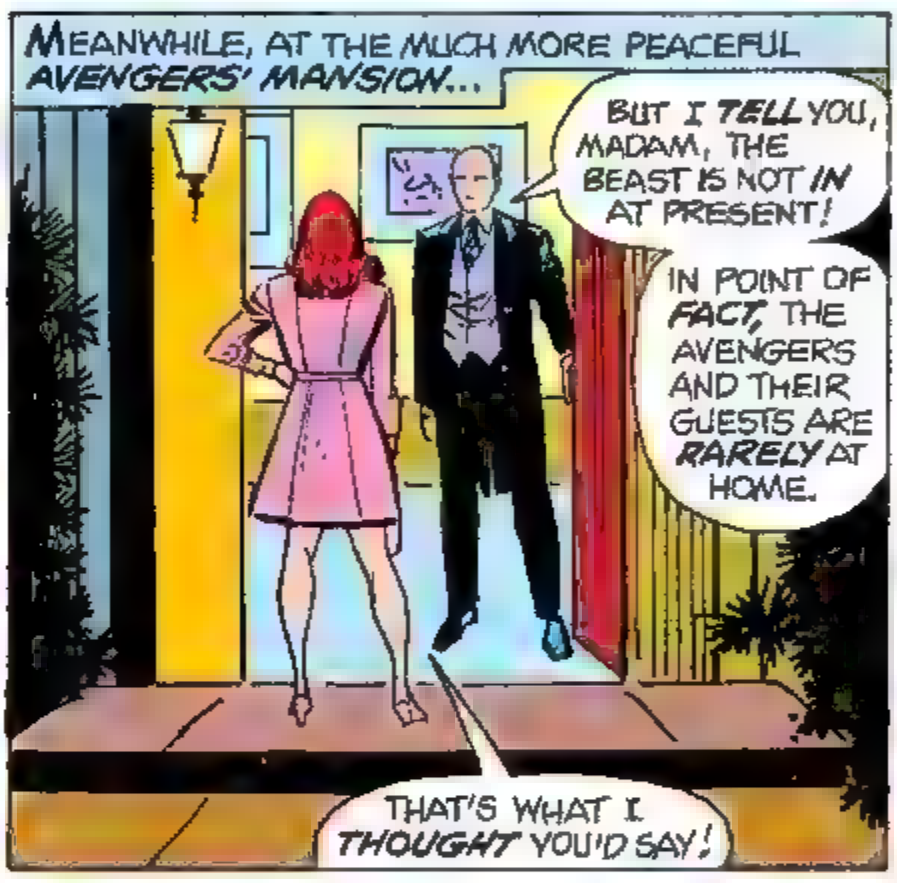

SOMEDAY, I'LL HAVE TO SPEAK TO CAPTAIN BAXTER--IF HE STILL HEADS UP SECURITY HERE--ABOUT THE WEAKNESS IN HIS STRATEGIES!
SOMEDAY--AFTER I FINISH NEEDING IT!
BLAM
NOW, LET'S HAVE SOME ACTION!

GRRRR!
LOOK OUT, MAN! THIS IS A BEAST CROSSING!

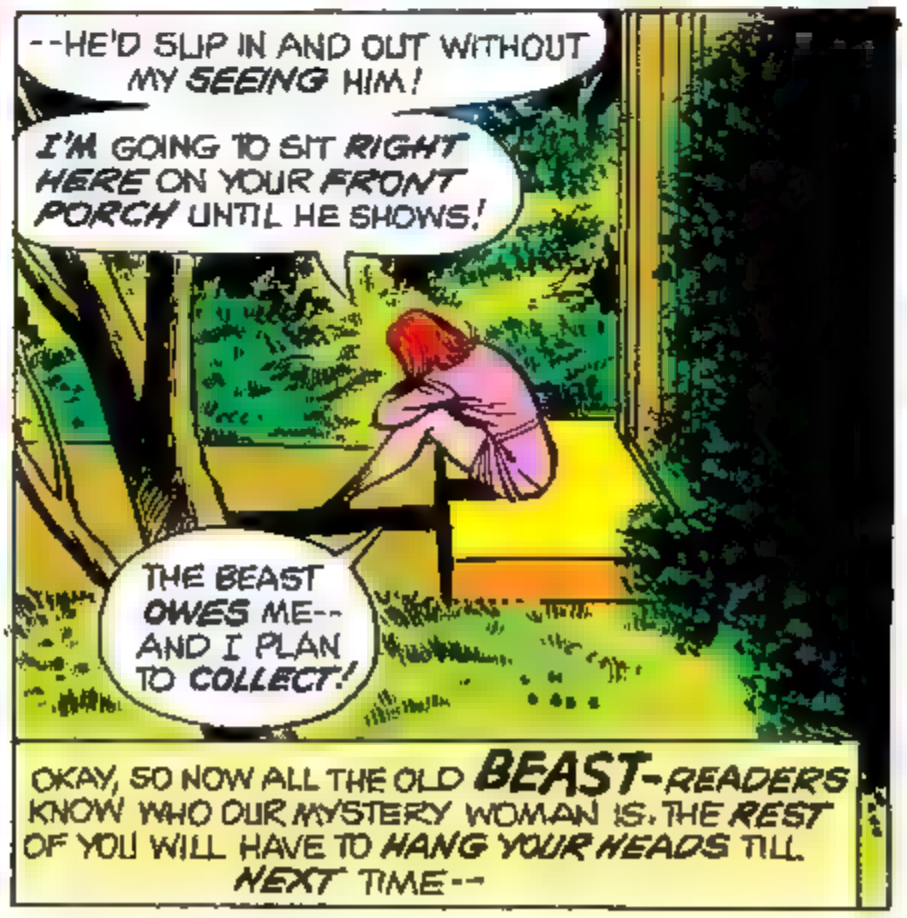

BYE, BOYS! REMEMBER, HAVE A NICE D--
OWW!
KRAK!
THAT'S ENOUGH SMART TALK OUTTA YOU, CRITTER!

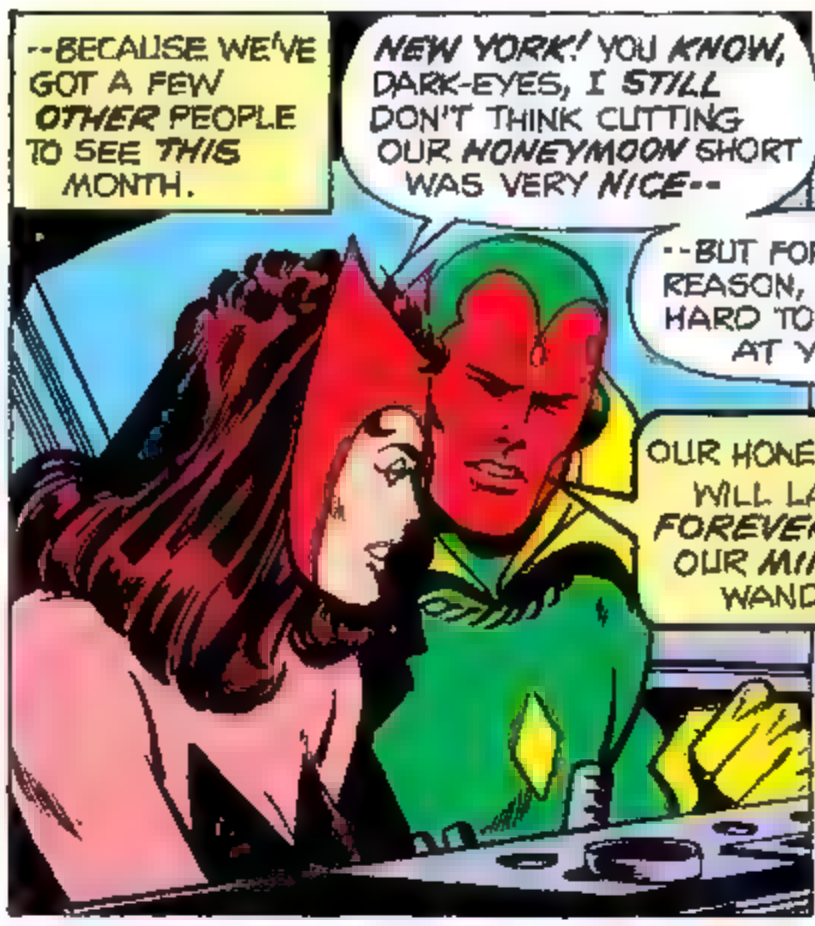
YOU MAY HAVE SPOOKED THEM OLD BOYS, BUT US NEW GUARDS ARE A DARN SIGHT BETTER SHOTS!
YOU PICKED THE WRONG DIRECTION TO RUN IN, JACK!

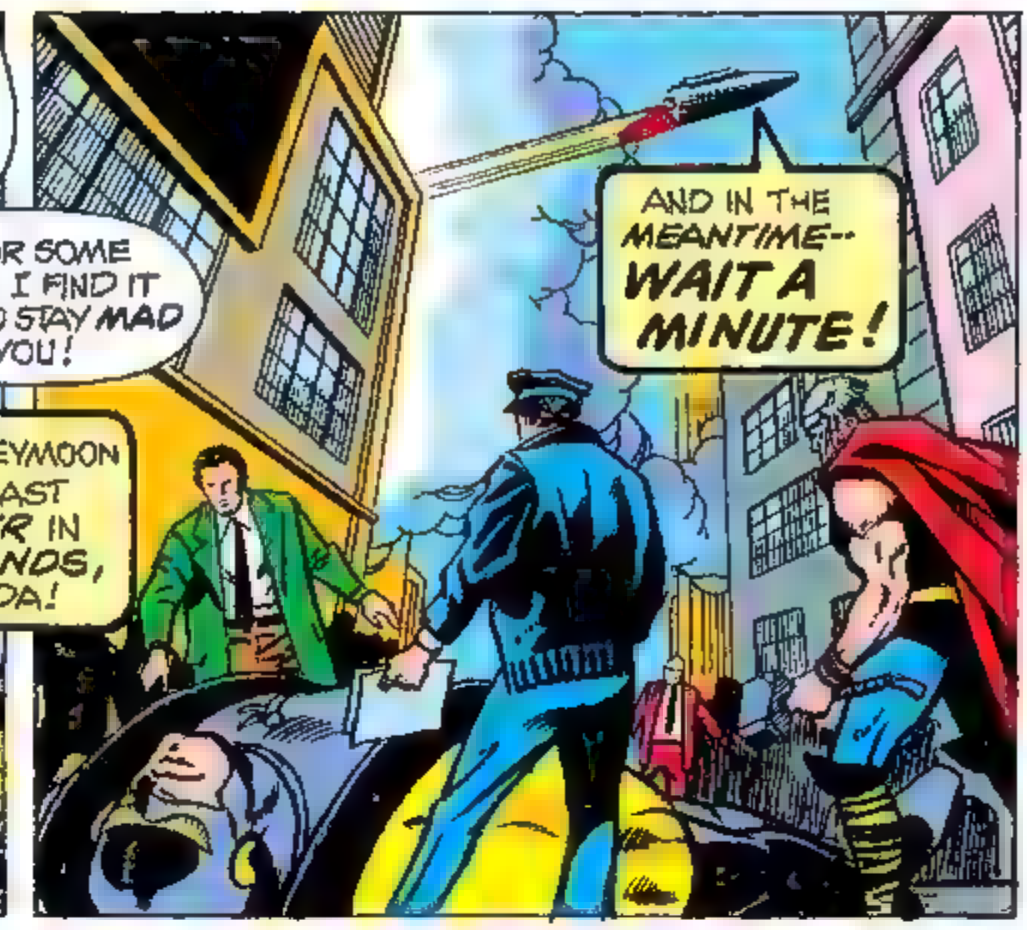
BOM!
HIRE A HALL!


MEANWHILE, AT THE MUCH MORE PEACEFUL AVENGERS' MANSION...
BUT I TELL YOU, MADAM, THE BEAST IS NOT IN AT PRESENT!
IN POINT OF FACT, THE AVENGERS AND THEIR GUESTS ARE RARELY AT HOME.
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY!

WAIT! I ONLY MEANT TO WARN YOU THAT I CANNOT SAY WHEN TO EXPECT HIM!
IF YOU'D CARE TO STEP INSIDE--?
NO, THANK YOU! IF I KNOW HIM--

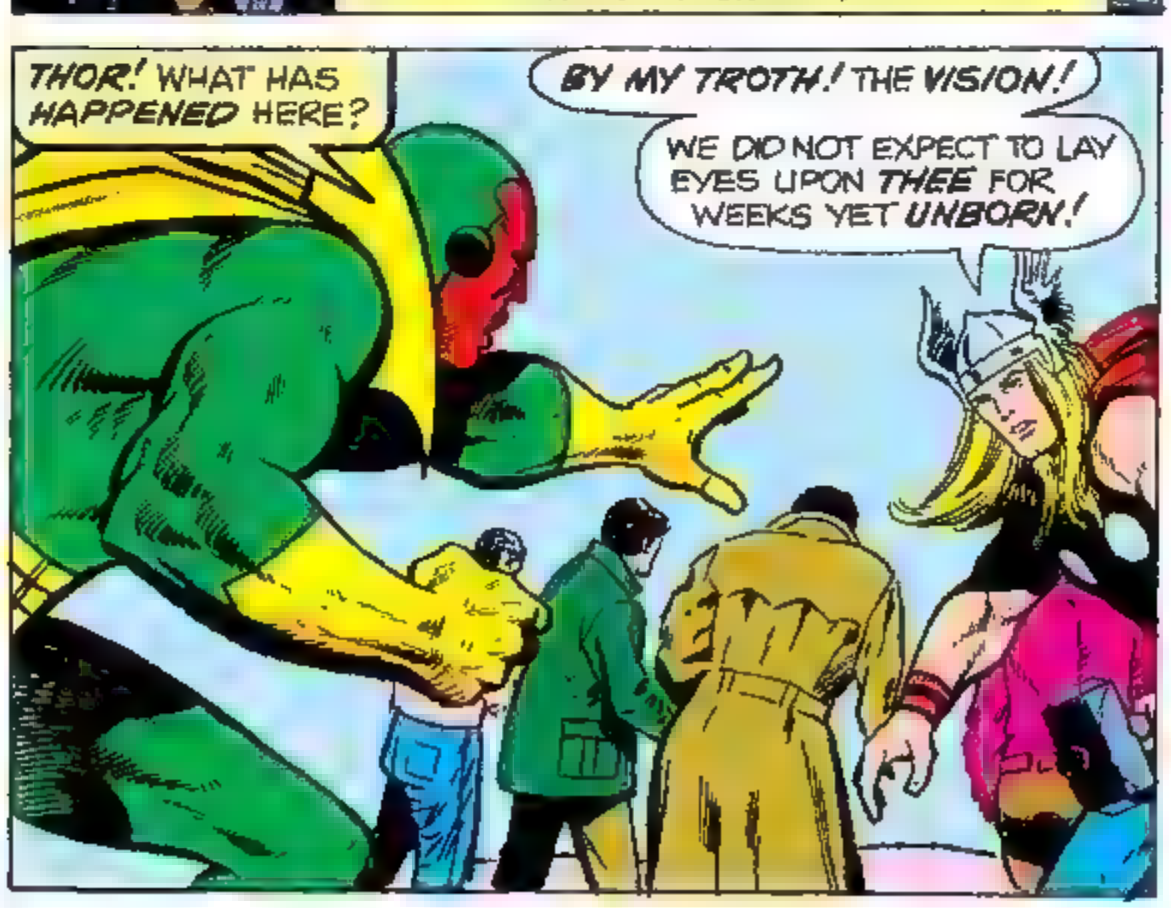

--HE'D SLIP IN AND OUT WITHOUT MY SEEING HIM!
I'M GOING TO SIT RIGHT HERE ON YOUR FRONT PORCH UNTIL HE SHOWS!
THE BEAST OWES ME-- AND I PLAN TO COLLECT!
OKAY, SO NOW ALL THE OLD BEAST-READERS KNOW WHO OUR MYSTERY WOMAN IS. THE REST OF YOU WILL HAVE TO HANG YOUR HEADS TILL NEXT TIME--


--BECAUSE WE'VE GOT A FEW OTHER PEOPLE TO SEE THIS MONTH.
NEW YORK! YOU KNOW, DARK-EYES, I STILL DON'T THINK CUTTING OUR HONEYMOON SHORT WAS VERY NICE--
--BUT FOR SOME REASON, I FIND IT HARD TO STAY MAD AT YOU!
OUR HONEYMOON WILL LAST FOREVER IN OUR MINDS, WANDA!

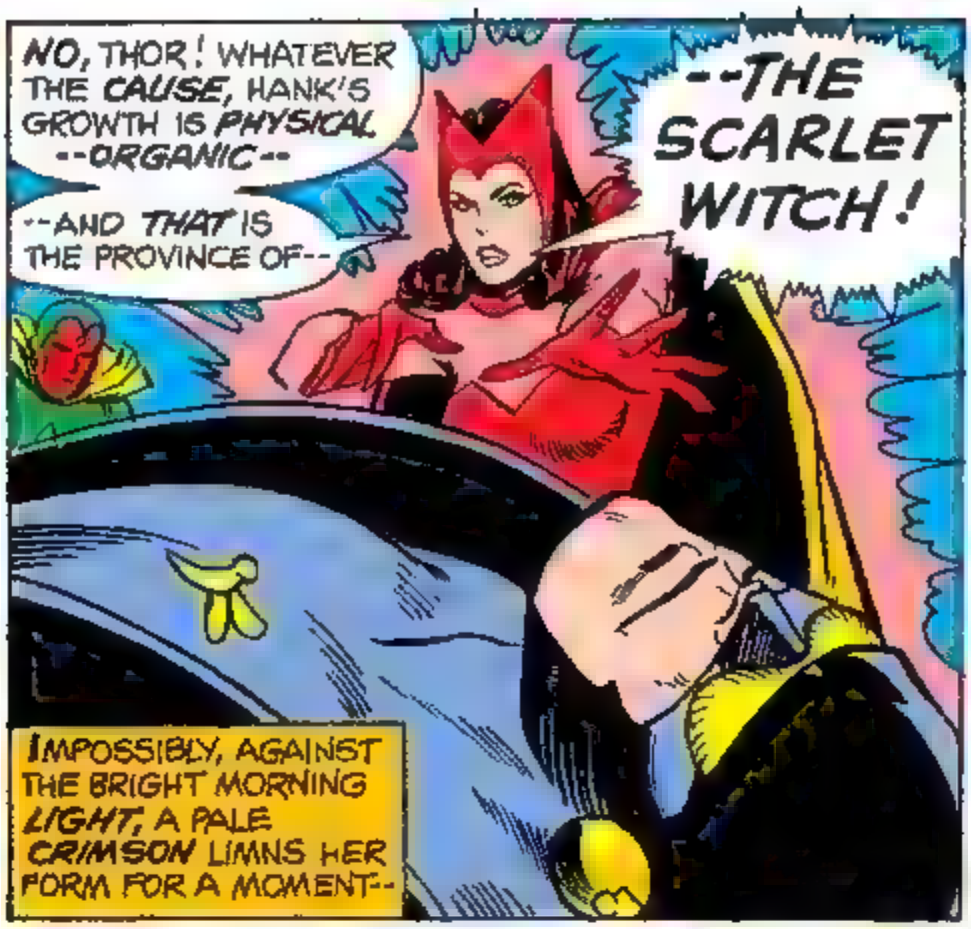

AND IN THE MEANTIME-- WAIT A MINUTE!

THAT'S YELLOWJACKET DOWN THERE...
...AND THERE'S THOR BESIDE HIM!

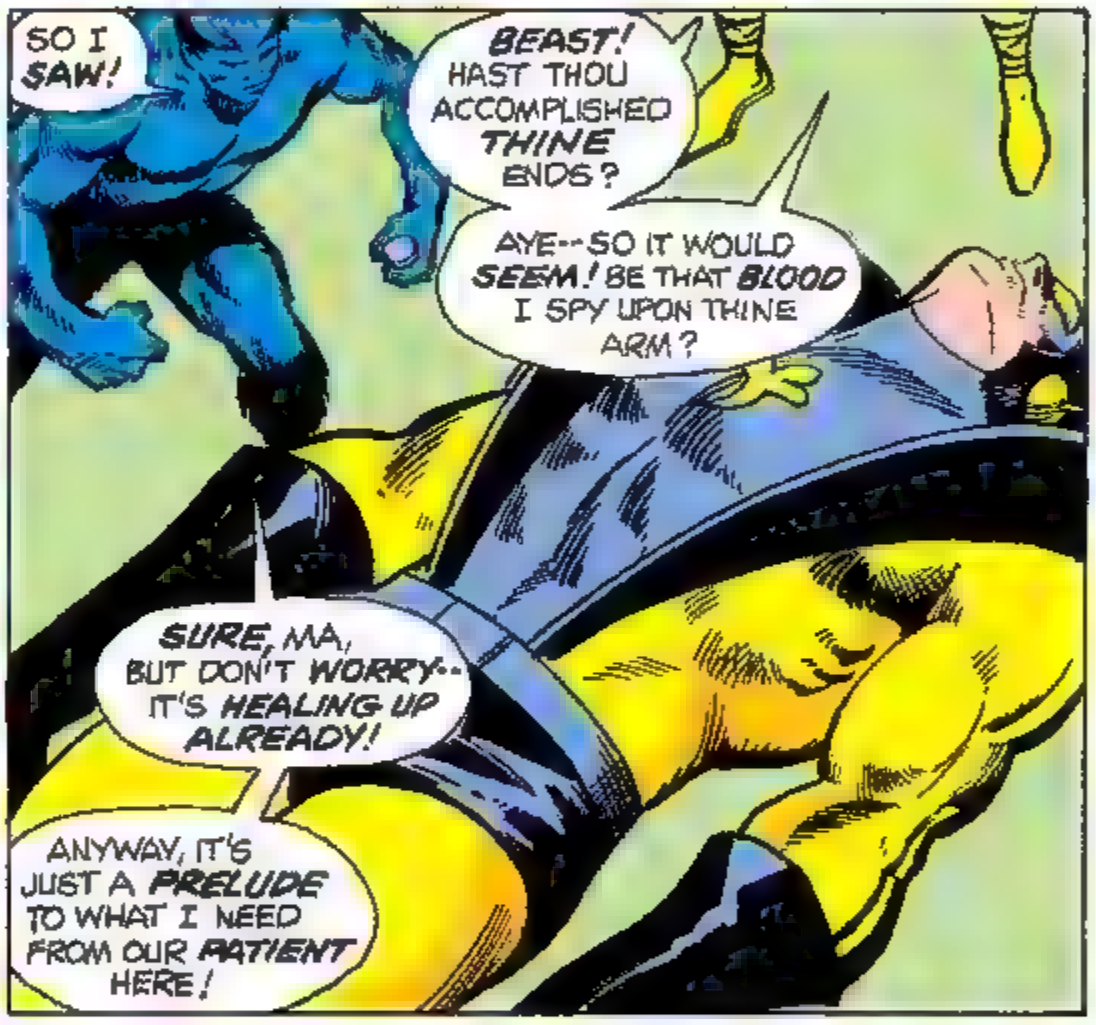
SWIFTLY, SURELY, THE SYNTHEZOID SHIFTS THE QUINJET'S CONTROLS, SENDING IT INTO A SCREAMING DIVE--
--AND A PICTURE-PERFECT LANDING ON THE CORDONED STREET!


THOR! WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE?
BY MY TROTH! THE VISION!
WE DID NOT EXPECT TO LAY EYES UPON THEE FOR WEEKS YET UNBORN!

OH? YOU TOO, EH?
NOW THAT YOU MENT--
'TIS A SAD HOUR WHICH DOTH MEET YE HERE, MY FRIENDS! YELLOWJACKET'S GROWTH ONCE AGAIN BURST ALL CONTROL!
AND WE WHO STAND BY HIM BE HELPLESS!
ALL CONTROL?


NO, THOR! WHATEVER THE CAUSE, HANK'S GROWTH IS PHYSICAL --ORGANIC--
--AND THAT IS THE PROVINCE OF--
--THE SCARLET WITCH!
IMPOSSIBLY, AGAINST THE BRIGHT MORNING LIGHT, A PALE CRIMSON LIMNS HER FORM FOR A MOMENT--

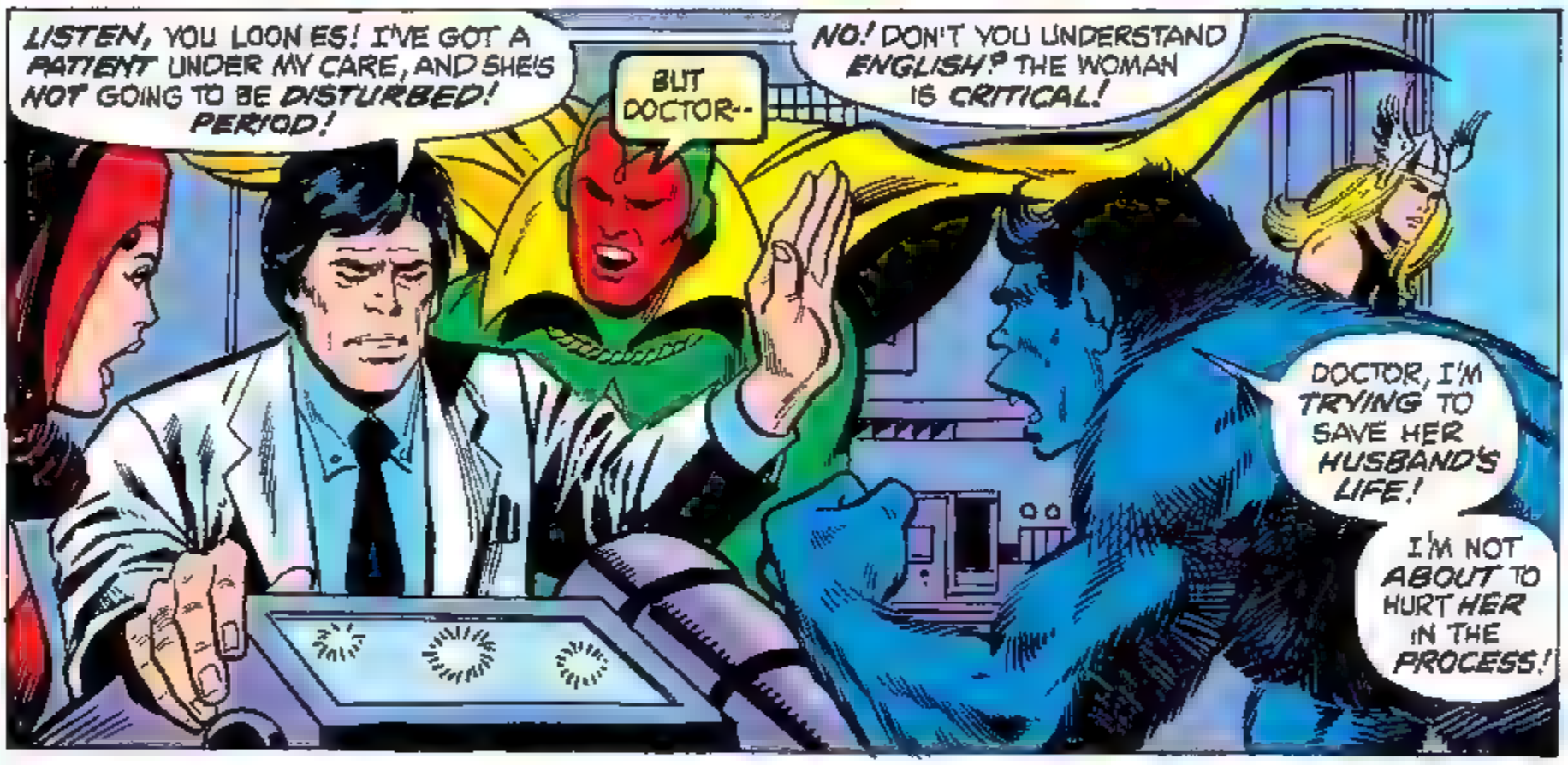
--AND THEN DIES AWAY.
I DID WHAT I COULD. THE GROWTH COULD NOT BE STOPPED THROUGH WITCHCRAFT...
...BUT IT'S BEEN SLOWED!


SO I SAW!
BEAST! HAST THOU ACCOMPLISHED THINE ENDS?
AYE--SO IT WOULD SEEM! BE THAT BLOOD I SPY UPON THINE ARM?
SURE, MA, BUT DON'T WORRY-- IT'S HEALING UP ALREADY!
ANYWAY, IT'S JUST A PRELUDE TO WHAT I NEED FROM OUR PATIENT HERE!

FOR WHAT REASON, "DOCTOR"? REMEMBER THAT THE MAN'S CELLS WILL ALL HAVE GROWN TO THE SAME DEGREE AS HE!
OH, MAN! THAT'S ME ALL OVER: THE RESEARCHER WHO FORGETS TO BE PRACTICAL!
NOW WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? I NEED TO RESEARCH THAT MICROBE!

THEN MAY I SUGGEST JANET PYM? HER BLOOD IS SIMILARLY INFECTED!
YEAH! OF COURSE! WHY D DN'T I THINK OF THAT?
BECAUSE IT'S TOO OBVIOUS!
OF COURSE THAT'S WHAT WE DO!

NOT A CHANCE!
HUH?

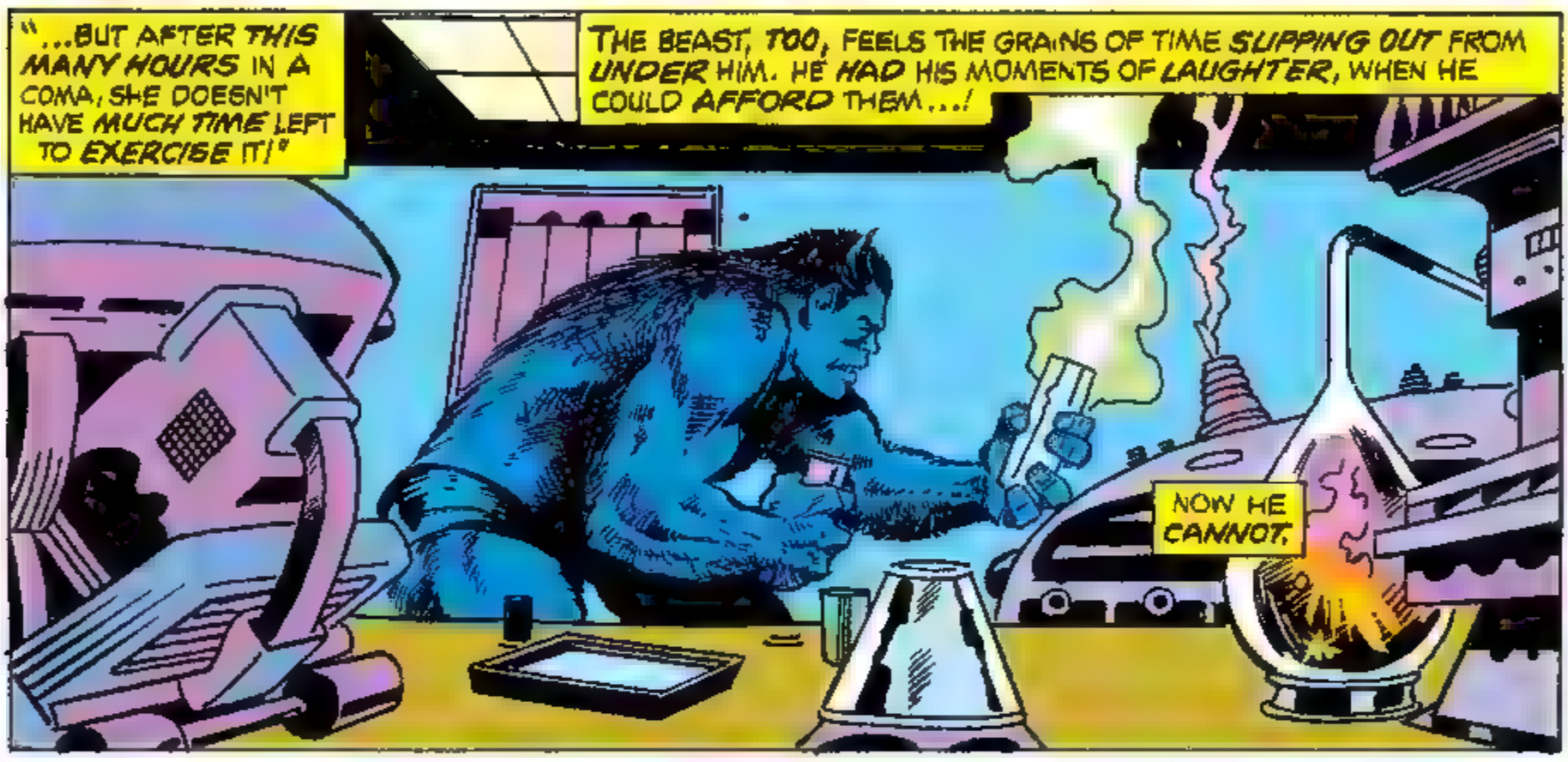

LISTEN, YOU LOON ES! I'VE GOT A PATIENT UNDER MY CARE, AND SHE'S NOT GOING TO BE DISTURBED! PERIOD!
BUT DOCTOR--
NO! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND ENGLISH? THE WOMAN IS CRITICAL!
DOCTOR, I'M TRYING TO SAVE HER HUSBAND'S LIFE!
I'M NOT ABOUT TO HURT HER IN THE PROCESS!

HOW DO I KNOW THAT, BEAST?
FOR ALL I KNOW, YOU MIGHT BE RELATED TO THAT X-MAN BEAST--AND YOU SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE ANY DOCTOR I KNOW!
WHAT ABOUT ME, THEN, HORRIGAN?

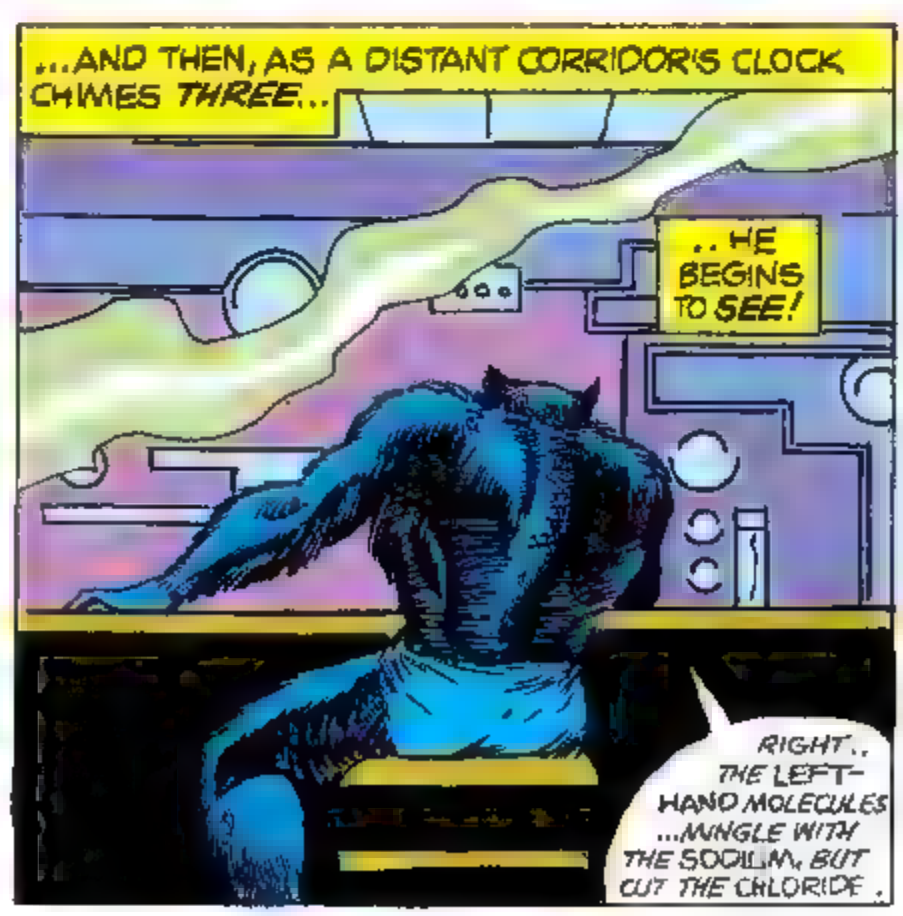
DON BLAKE! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN AGES!
I DON'T GET BACK TO NEW YORK MUCH ANY MORE, RICH* ...BUT IF YOU'LL GRANT AN OLD CLASSMATE A PROFESSIONAL COURTESY--
--I'LL VOUCH FOR THIS SCIENTIST'S WORK.
*ONLY WE AND IRON MAN KNOW BLAKE IS THOR'S SECRET I.D.--M.

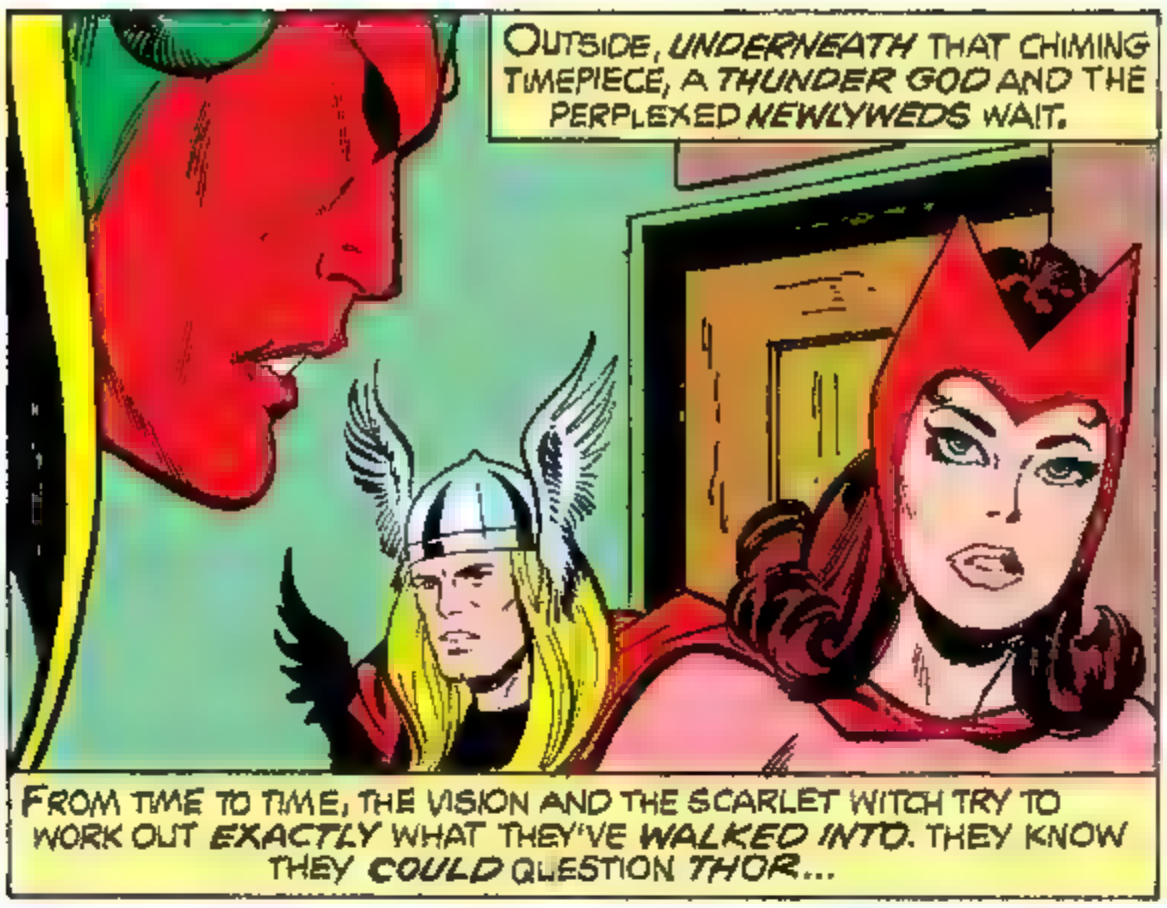
YOU'RE INVOLVED WITH THESE WEIRDOS ?! NEXT, I SUPPOSE, WALTER CRONKITE WILL BE ROLLING BANDAGES FOR THEM!
I GIVE UP! I SURRENDER! DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!

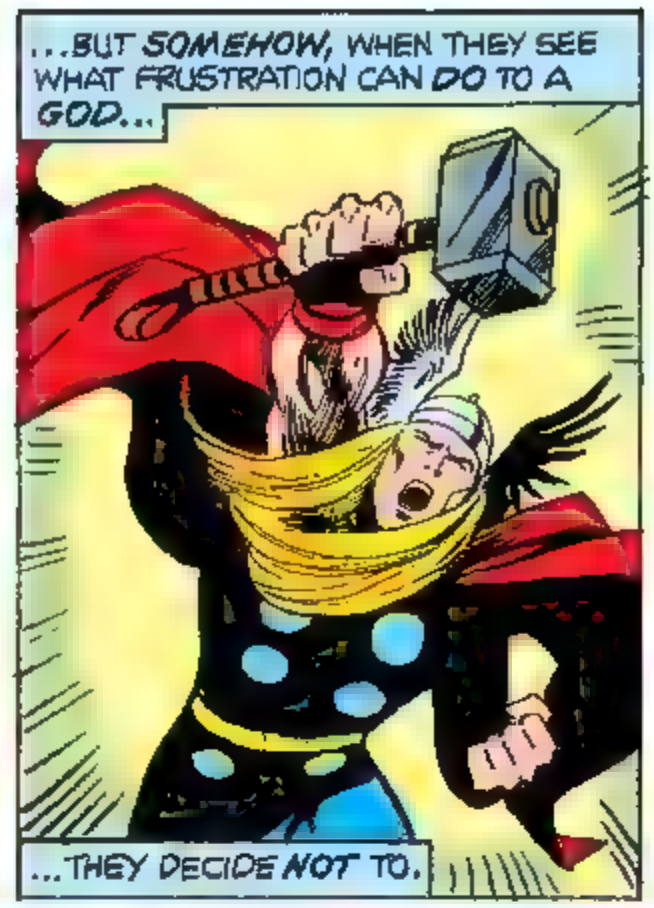
AND SO, AS A HASTENING SUN NEARS ITS NOONPOINT...
DRAWING BLOOD MADE NO DIFFERENCE TO JAN, AS I KNEW.
HER FATE RESTS SOLELY IN HER WILL TO LIVE!!

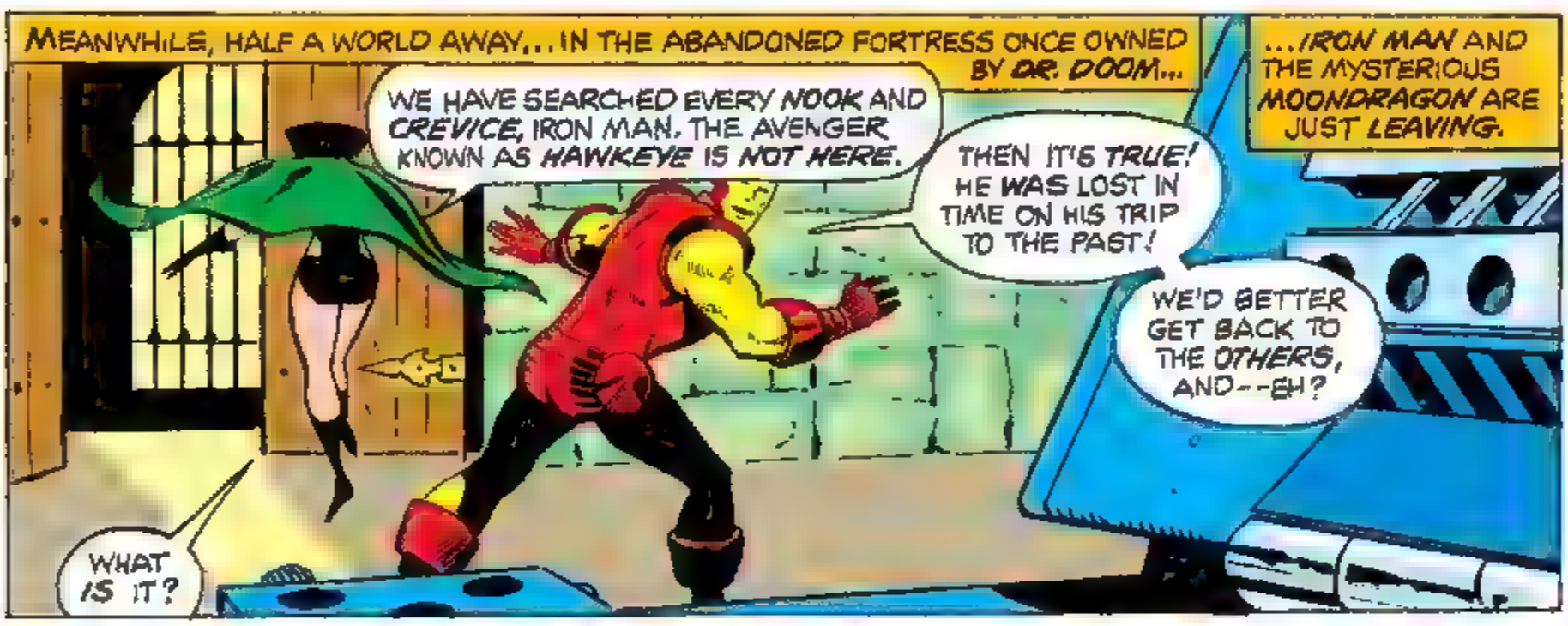

"...BUT AFTER THIS MANY HOURS IN A COMA, SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT TO EXERCISE IT!"
THE BEAST, TOO, FEELS THE GRAINS OF TIME SLIPPING OUT FROM UNDER HIM. HE HAD HIS MOMENTS OF LAUGHTER, WHEN HE COULD AFFORD THEM...!
NOW HE CANNOT.

SILENCE FALLS IN THE HOSPITAL'S HASTILY-BORROWED LAB...:
...A DARK SILENCE, QUITE UNLIKE THE SUNLIGHT OUTSIDE.
HOURS SLIDE INTO ETERNITY, EACH ONE'S PASSING GRIMLY MARKED...


...AND THEN, AS A DISTANT CORRIDOR'S CLOCK CHIMES THREE...
..HE BEGINS TO SEE!
RIGHT.. THE LEFT-HAND MOLECULES ...MINGLE WITH THE SODIUM, BUT CUT THE CHLORIDE.


OUTSIDE, UNDERNEATH THAT CHIMING TIMEPIECE, A THUNDER GOD AND THE PERPLEXED NEWLYWEDS WAIT.
FROM TIME TO TIME, THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH TRY TO WORK OUT EXACTLY WHAT THEY'VE WALKED INTO. THEY KNOW THEY COULD QUESTION THOR...


...BUT SOMEHOW, WHEN THEY SEE WHAT FRUSTRATION CAN DO TO A GOD...
...THEY DECIDE NOT TO.


MEANWHILE, HALF A WORLD AWAY...IN THE ABANDONED FORTRESS ONCE OWNED BY DR. DOOM...
WE HAVE SEARCHED EVERY NOOK AND CREVICE, IRON MAN, THE AVENGER KNOWN AS HAWKEYE IS NOT HERE.
THEN IT'S TRUE! HE WAS LOST IN TIME ON HIS TRIP TO THE PAST!
...IRON MAN AND THE MYSTERIOUS MOONDRAGON ARE JUST LEAVING.
WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE OTHERS, AND--EH?
WHAT IS IT?

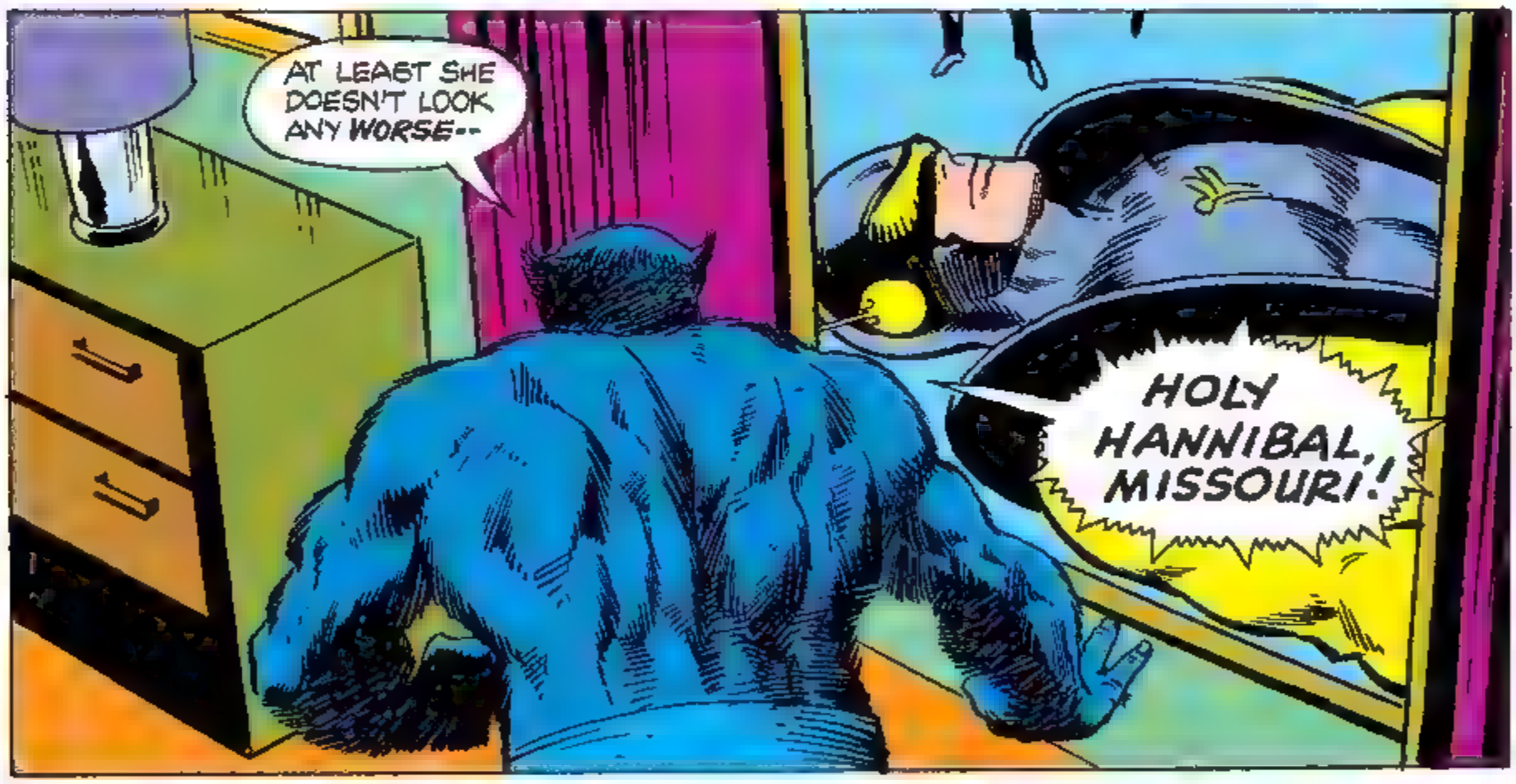
WHAT DO YOU--OHO! THE TIME MACHINE ITSELF HAS SILENTLY REAPPEARED!
AND LOOK! THAT'S BLOOD ON ITS DECK!

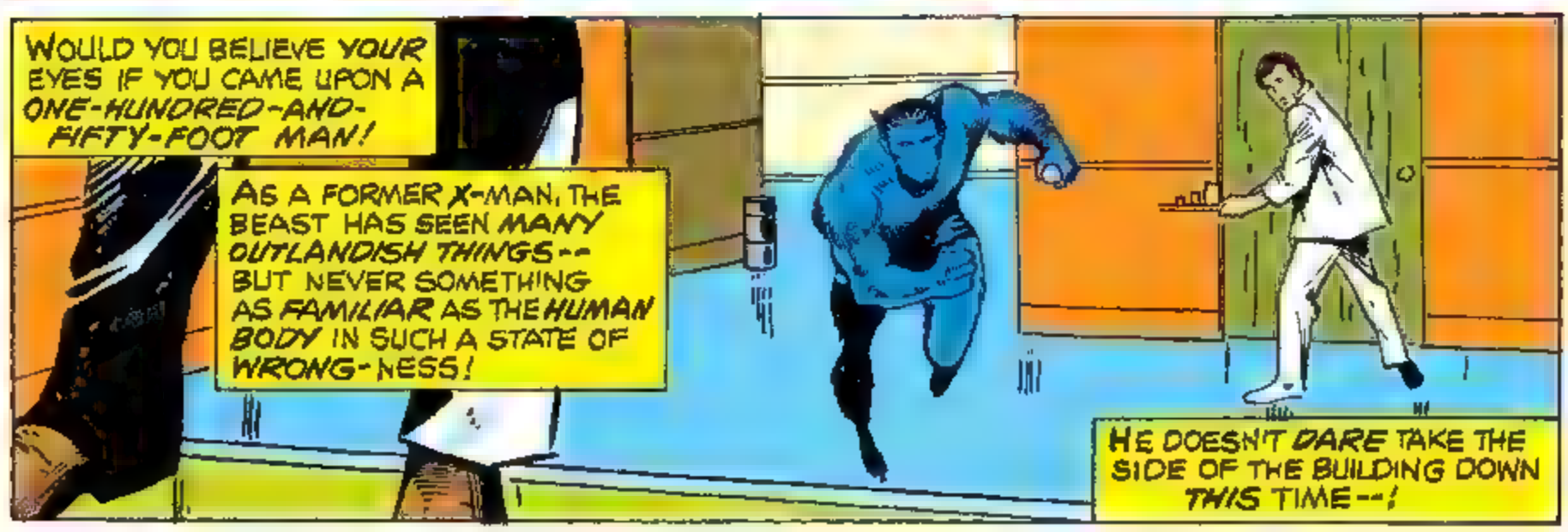
NOW, MORE THAN EVER, MUST WE FEAR THAT SOME HARM HAS BEFALLEN YOUR FRIEND, IRON MAN...
...AND YET...
I SENSE IT, TOO, MOONDRAGON --EVEN WITHOUT YOUR EXPANDED MIND. THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS LAST LITTLE TOUCH--
--THAT SPELLS "TRAP!"

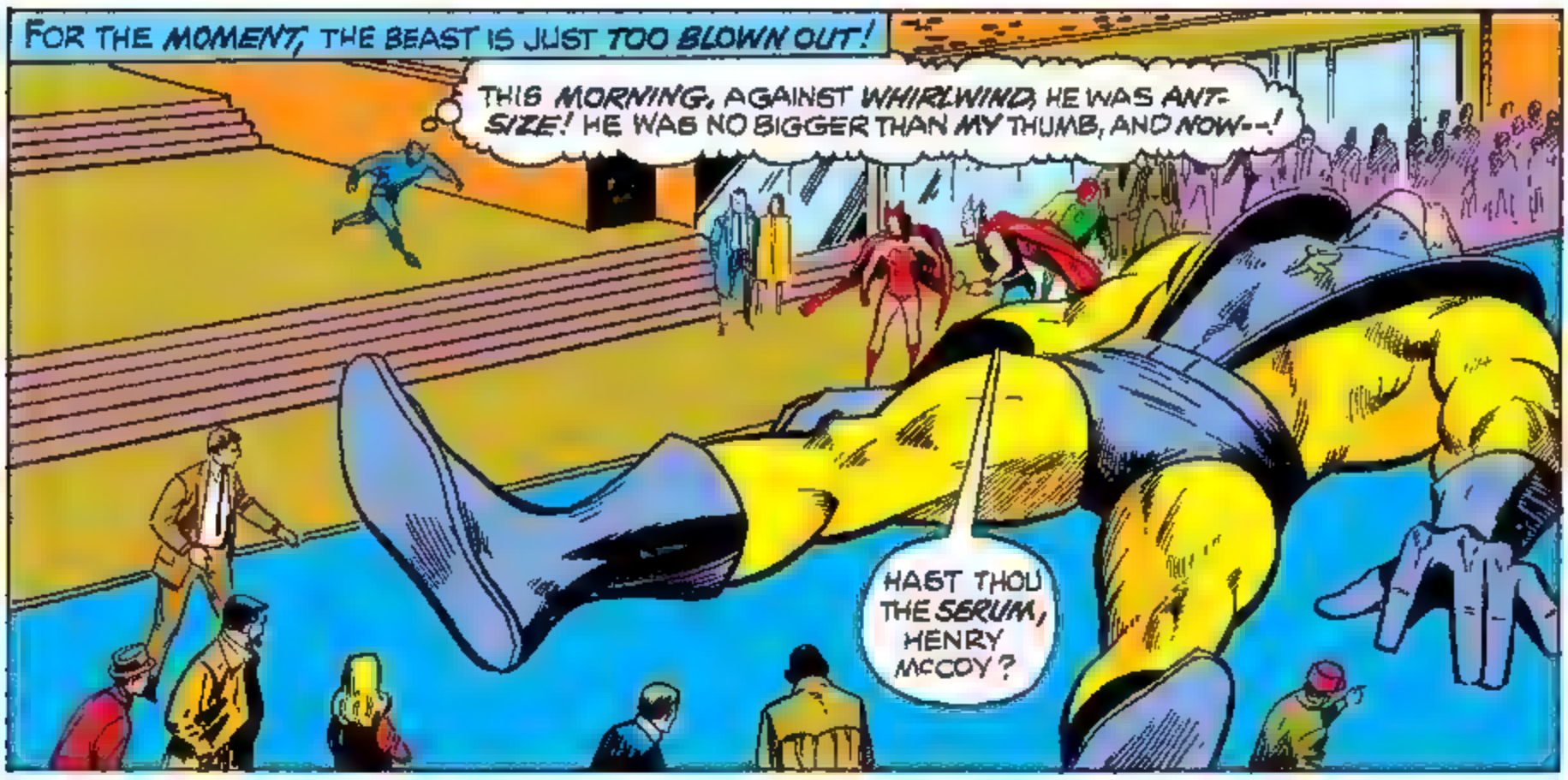
WOW!
IT'LL WORK! I'M SURE IT'LL WORK!
I'VE SAVED THE POOR GUY--!

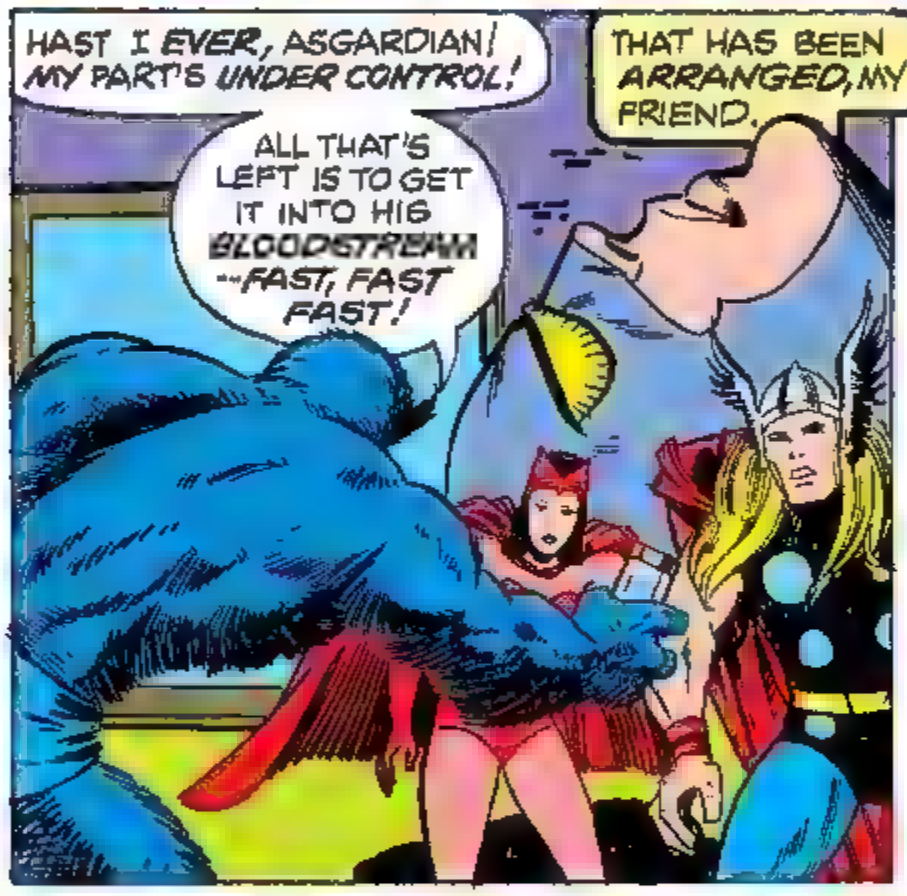
--THAT IS, UNLESS HE'S KICKED OFF IN THE FIVE HOURS IT TOOK ME TO DO IT--!

--OR JAN HAS!
BUT NO! SHE LOOKS THE SAME AS EVER!
THERE MAY EVEN BE SOME IMPROVEMENT, AVENGER. DR. BLAKE CHECKS IN EVERY FIFTEEN MINUTES, AND HE SAYS HE'S ENCOURAGED.
THEN I'M ENCOURAGED!


AT LEAST SHE DOESN'T LOOK ANY WORSE--
HOLY HANNIBAL, MISSOURI!

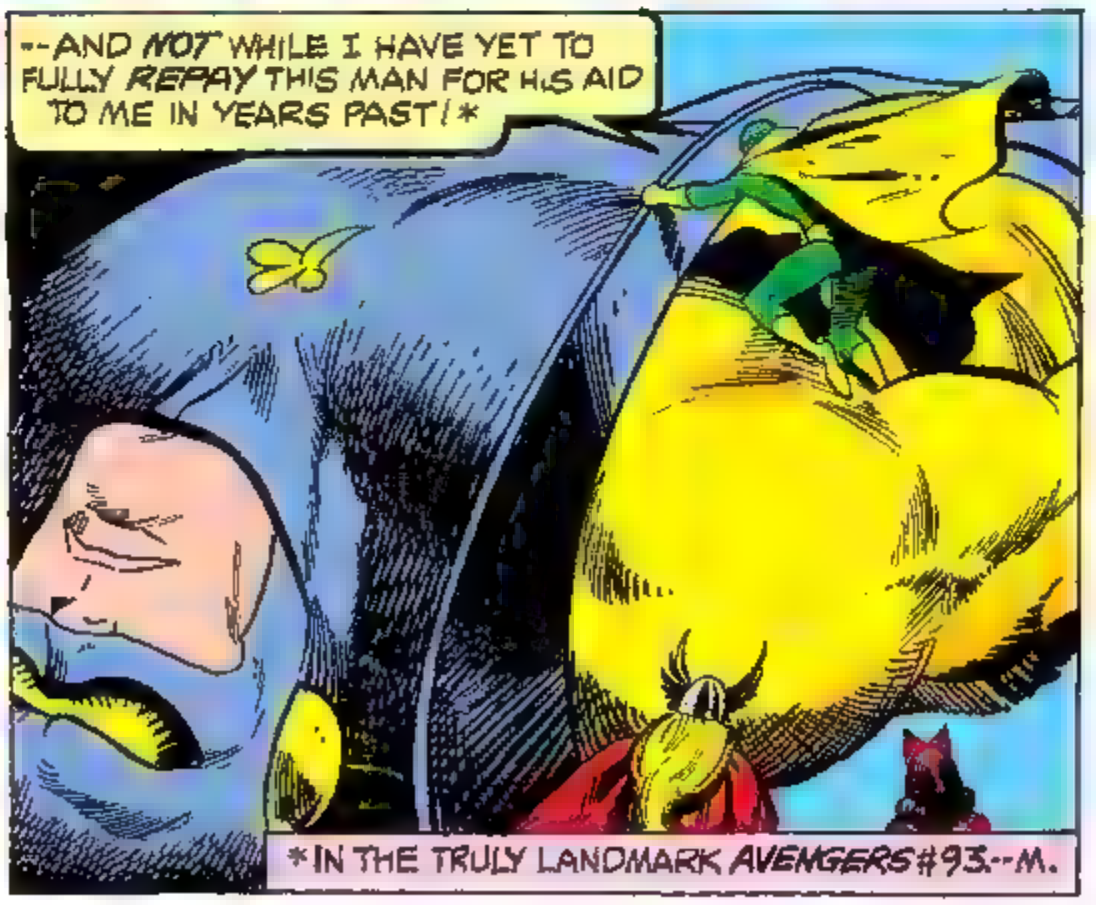

WOULD YOU BELIEVE YOUR EYES IF YOU CAME UPON A ONE-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-FOOT MAN!
AS A FORMER X-MAN, THE BEAST HAS SEEN MANY OUTLANDISH THINGS-- BUT NEVER SOMETHING AS FAMILIAR AS THE HUMAN BODY IN SUCH A STATE OF WRONG-NESS!
HE DOESN'T DARE TAKE THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING DOWN THIS TIME--!

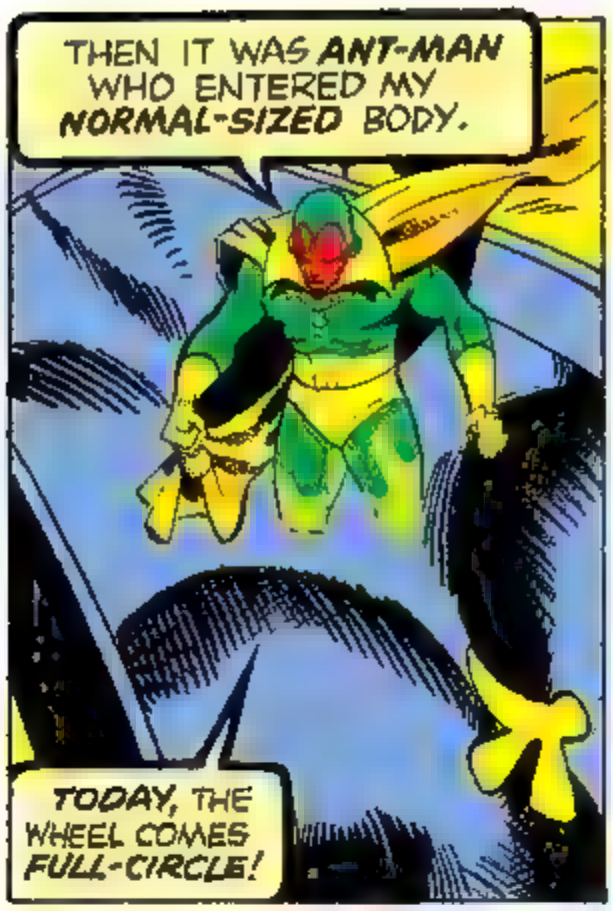

FOR THE MOMENT, THE BEAST IS JUST TOO BLOWN OUT!
THIS MORNING, AGAINST WHIRLWIND, HE WAS ANT-SIZE! HE WAS NO BIGGER THAN MY THUMB, AND NOW--!
HAST THOU THE SERUM, HENRY McCOY?

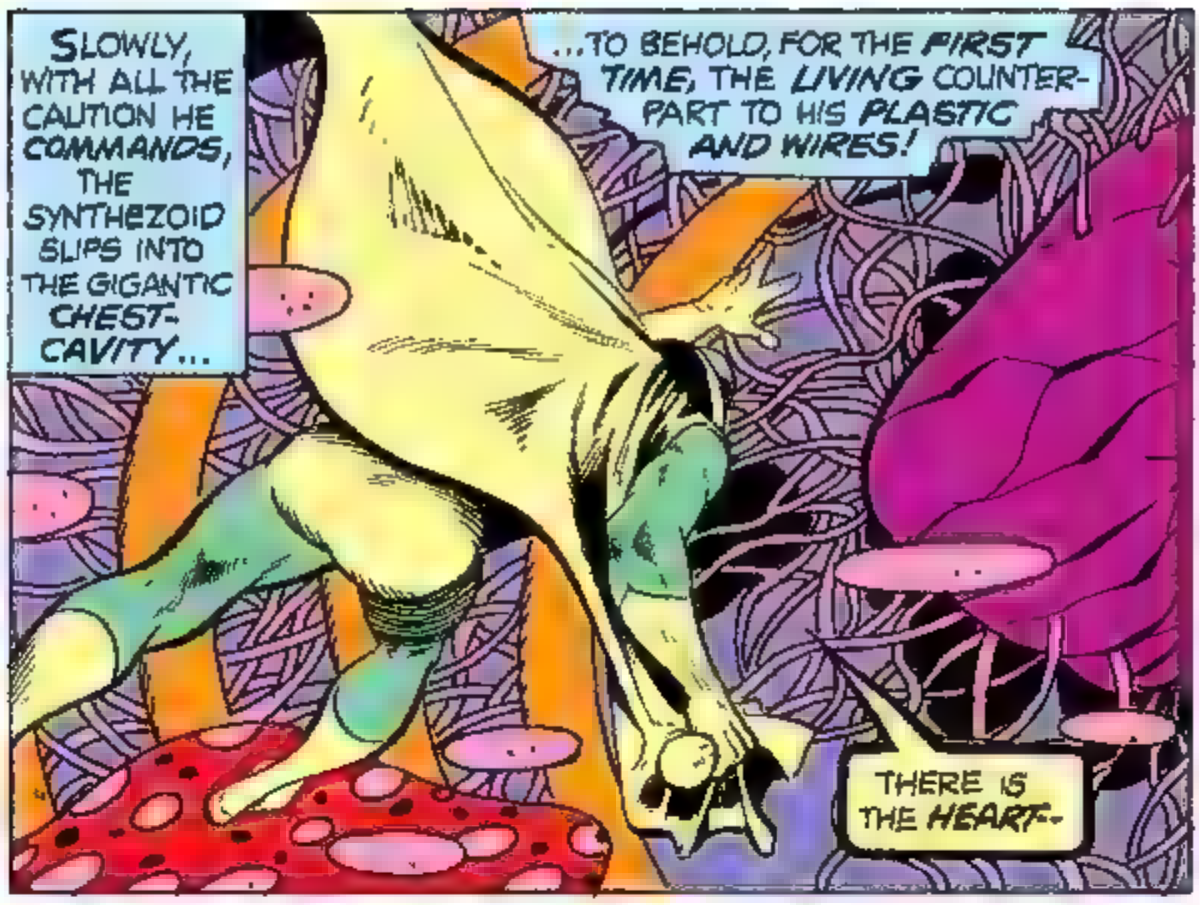

HAST I EVER, ASGARDIAN! MY PART'S UNDER CONTROL!
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO GET IT INTO HIS BLOODSTREAM --FAST, FAST FAST!
THAT HAS BEEN ARRANGED, MY FRIEND.

THE VISION WILL TAKE YOUR FORMULA INTO YELLOWJACKET'S UNMOVING FORM!
I KNOW IT COULD SIMPLY BE INJECTED...

...BUT NOT WHILE I CAN CONTROL THE DENSITY OF MYSELF, MY COSTUME, AND ALL WITHIN IT--


--AND NOT WHILE I HAVE YET TO FULLY REPAY THIS MAN FOR HIS AID TO ME IN YEARS PAST!*
*IN THE TRULY LANDMARK AVENGERS #93.--M.

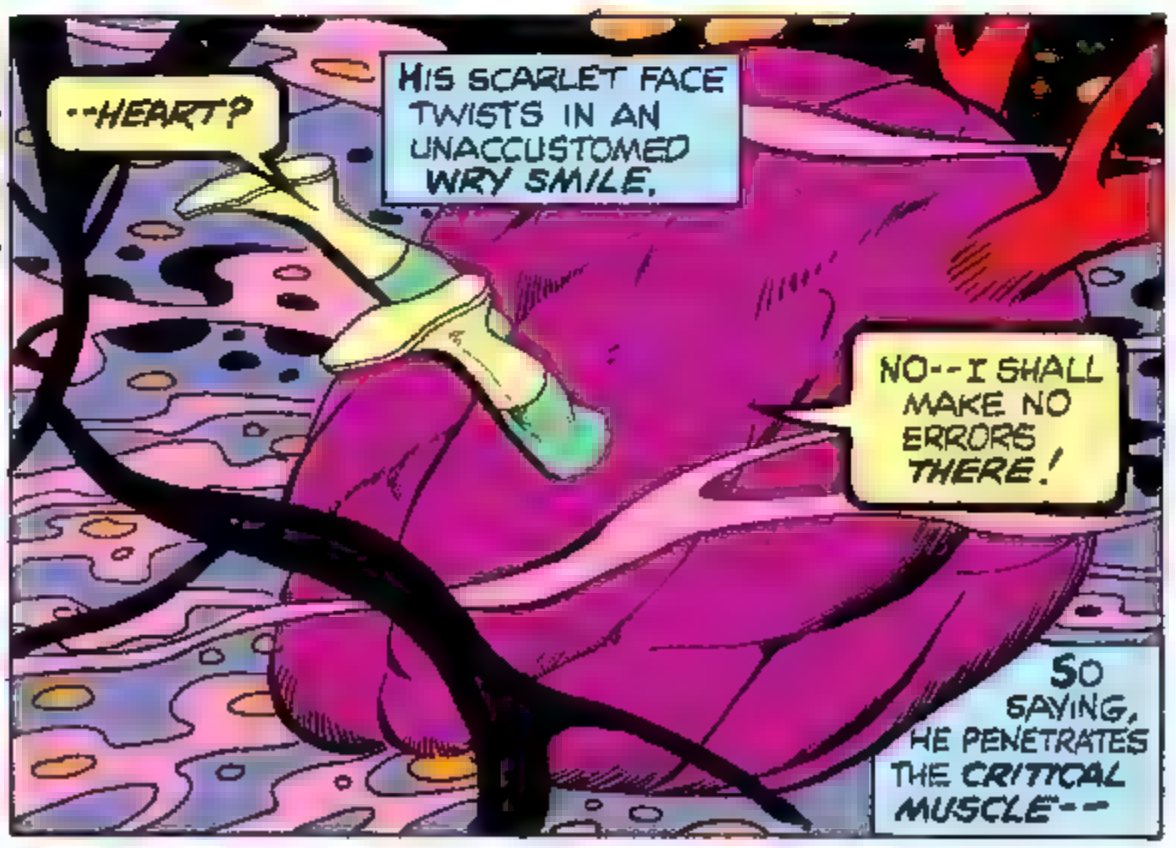

THEN IT WAS ANT-MAN WHO ENTERED MY NORMAL-SIZED BODY.
TODAY, THE WHEEL COMES FULL-CIRCLE!

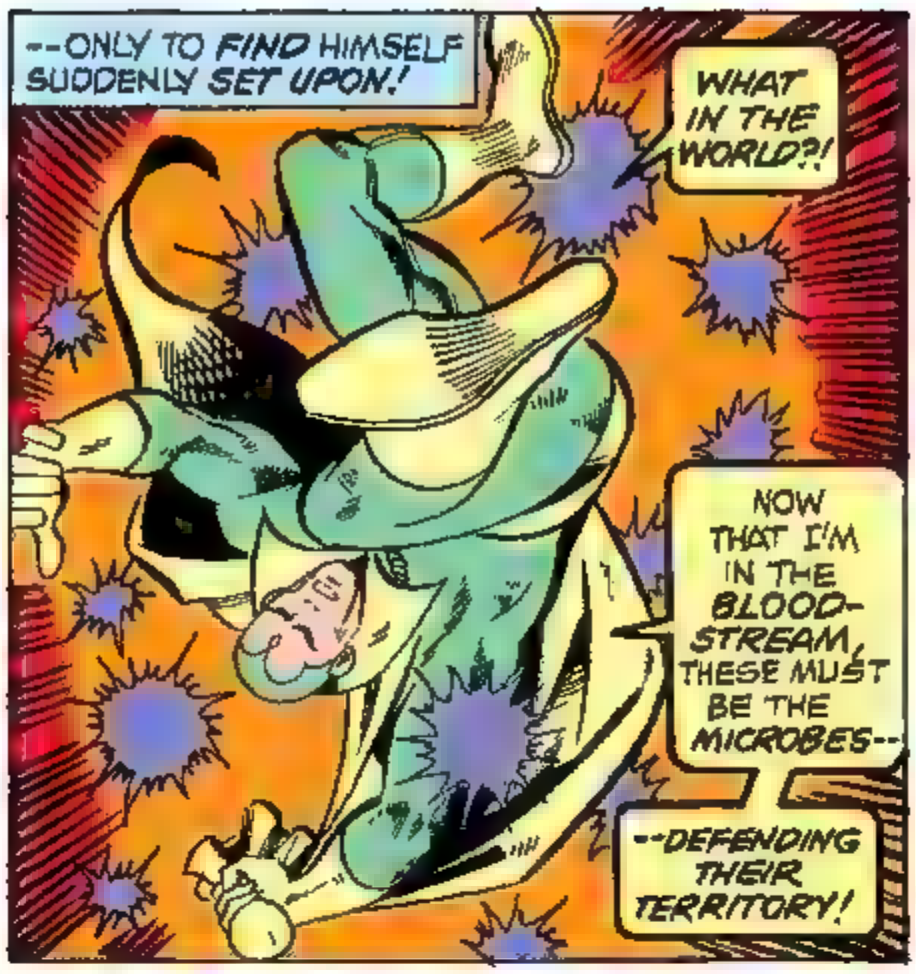

SLOWLY, WITH ALL THE CAUTION HE COMMANDS, THE SYNTHEZOID SLIPS INTO THE GIGANTIC CHEST-CAVITY...
...TO BEHOLD, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE LIVING COUNTER-PART TO HIS PLASTIC AND WIRES!
THERE IS THE HEART--

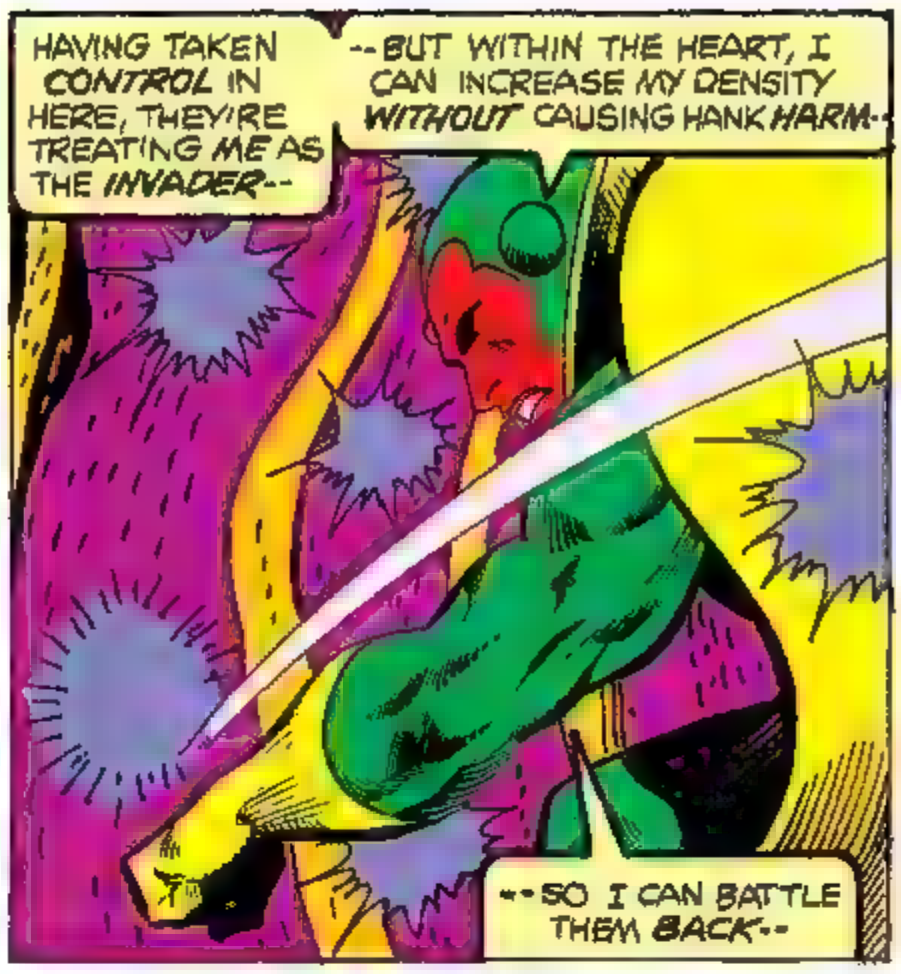
--BUT THE ROUTE TO IT IS CLOGGED WITH FIBERS--VEINS!
THOUGH INTANGIBLE, I MUST MOVE WITH CARE--

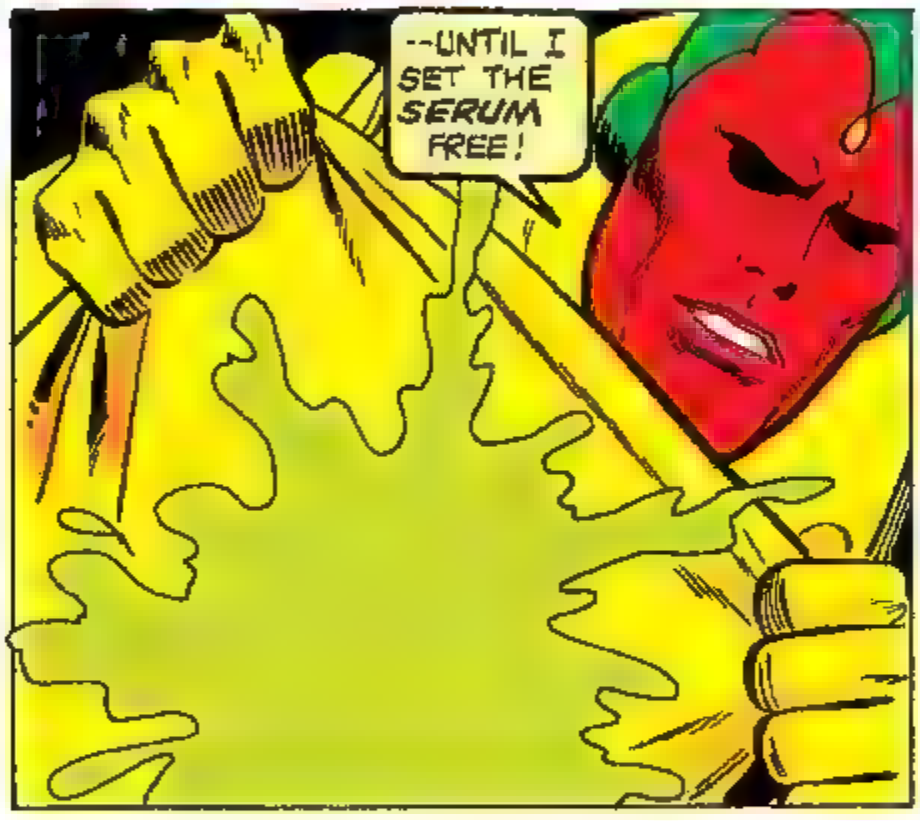
--FOR I KNOW NOT HOW THE BEAST HAS CAUSED THIS SERUM TO BECOME AS PHANTASMAL AS MYSELF--
--AND ANY MISHAP MAY CAUSE HANK PYM'S INSTANT DEATH!

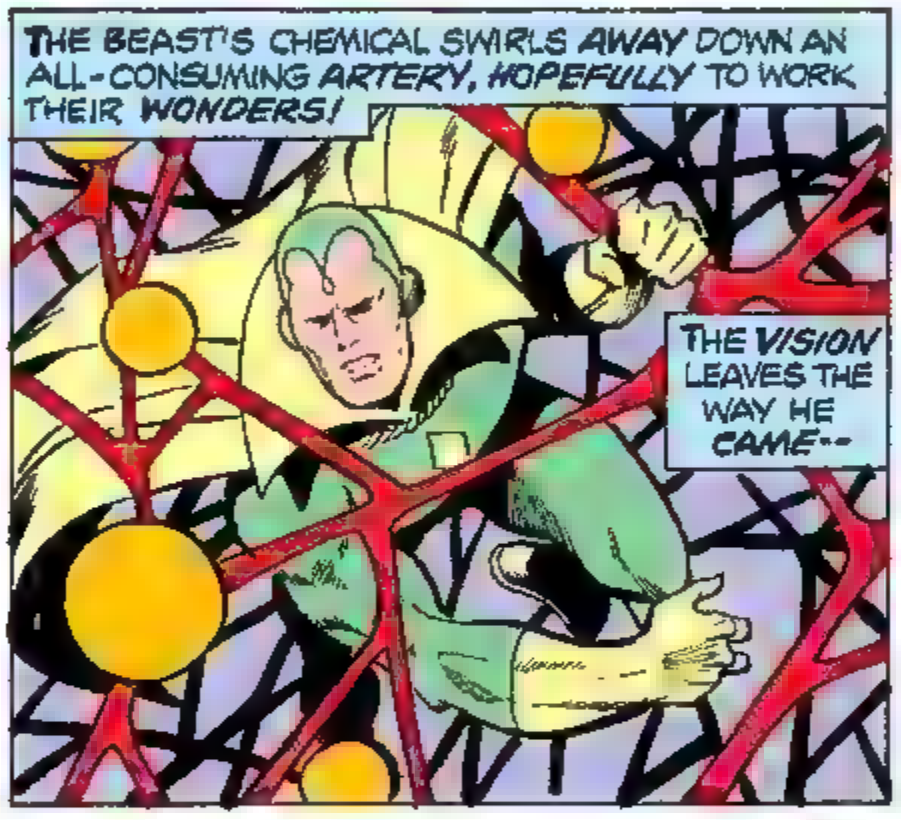
STILL, I AM NOT A MAN TO MAKE ERRORS IN JUDGMENT--
--EXCEPT, IF I READ THE OTHERS' REACTIONS TO MY SHORTENED HONEY-MOON IN MATTERS OF THE--

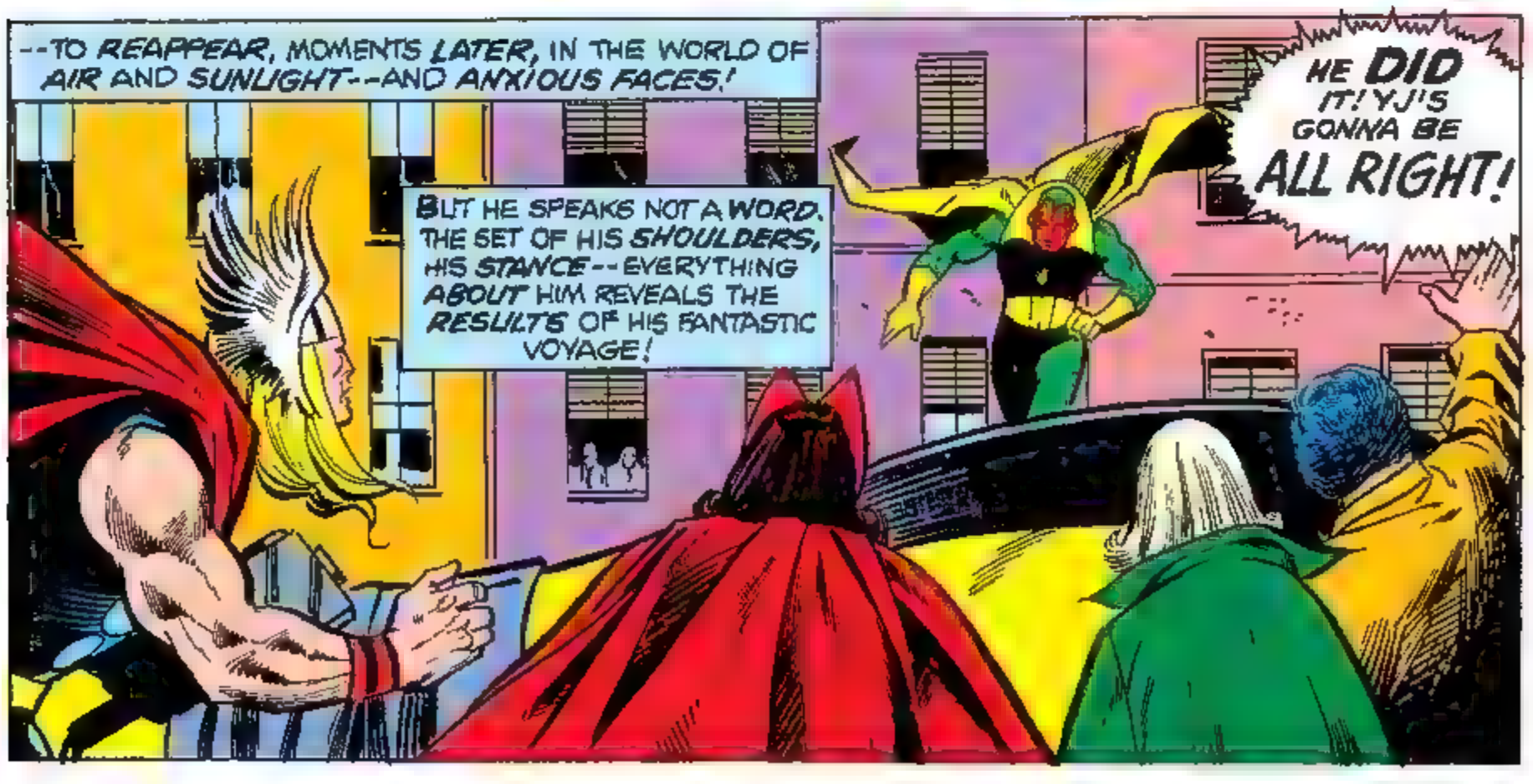

--HEART?
HIS SCARLET FACE TWISTS IN AN UNACCUSTOMED WRY SMILE.
NO--I SHALL MAKE NO ERRORS THERE!
SO SAYING, HE PENETRATES THE CRITICAL MUSCLE--


--ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF SUDDENLY SET UPON!
WHAT IN THE WORLD?!
NOW THAT I'M IN THE BLOOD-STREAM, THESE MUST BE THE MICROBES--
--DEFENDING THEIR TERRITORY!

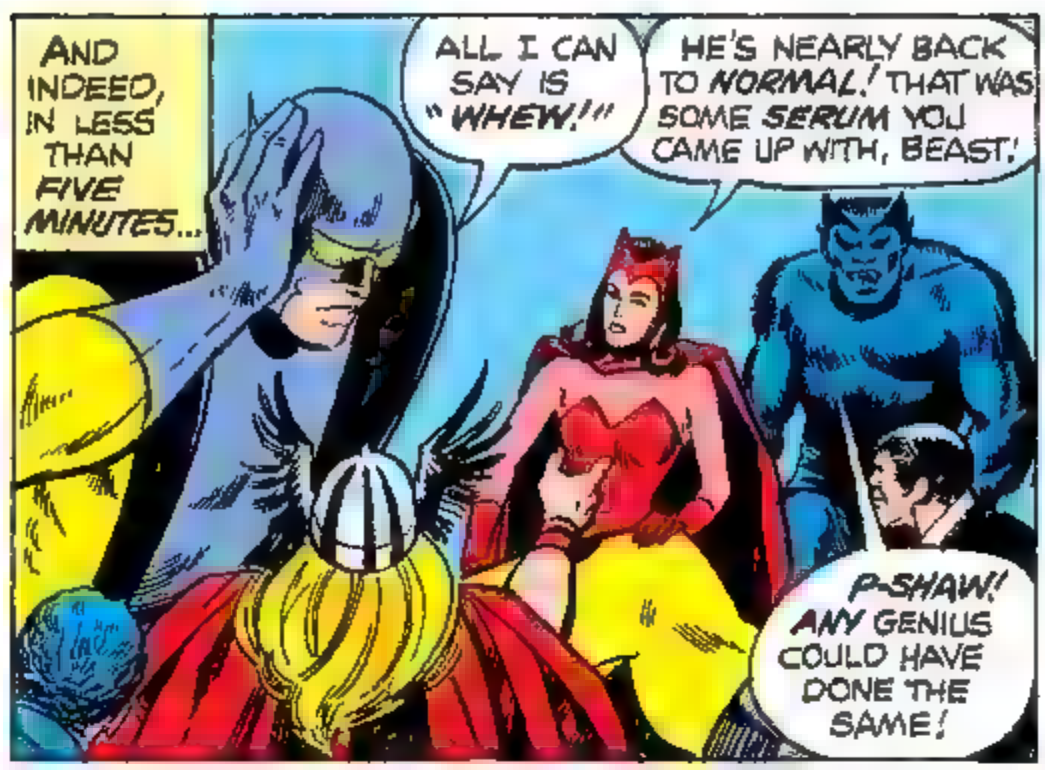

HAVING TAKEN CONTROL IN HERE, THEY'RE TREATING ME AS THE INVADER--
--BUT WITHIN THE HEART, I CAN INCREASE MY DENSITY WITHOUT CAUSING HANK HARM--
--SO I CAN BATTLE THEM BACK--


--UNTIL I SET THE SERUM FREE!


THE BEAST'S CHEMICAL SWIRLS AWAY DOWN AN ALL-CONSUMING ARTERY, HOPEFULLY TO WORK THEIR WONDERS!
THE VISION LEAVES THE WAY HE CAME--


--TO REAPPEAR, MOMENTS LATER, IN THE WORLD OF AIR AND SUNLIGHT--AND ANXIOUS FACES!
BUT HE SPEAKS NOT A WORD. THE SET OF HIS SHOULDERS, HIS STANCE--EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM REVEALS THE RESULTS OF HIS FANTASTIC VOYAGE!
HE DID IT! YJ'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT!

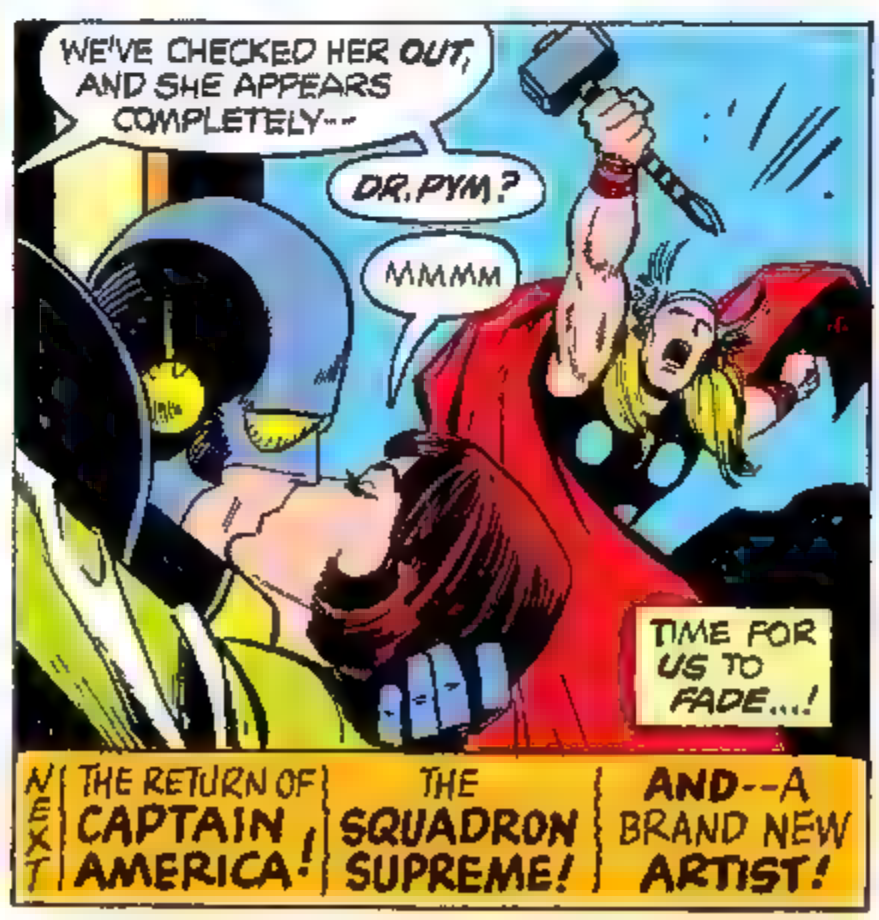
LOOK! YOU CAN SEE IT IF YOU LOOK HARD!
HE'S ALREADY SHRINKING!


AND INDEED, IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES...
ALL I CAN SAY IS "WHEW!"
HE'S NEARLY BACK TO NORMAL! THAT WAS SOME SERUM YOU CAME UP WITH, BEAST!
P-SHAW! ANY GENIUS COULD HAVE DONE THE SAME!

WELL, I--HEY! WHERE'S HE GOING?
LIE BACK DOWN, AVENGER! YOU SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO WALK --LET ALONE RUN!
NO WAY, VISION! I STARTED OUT TO ENTER THIS HOSPITAL, AND THAT'S STILL THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME!
I GRANT YOU I'M NOT VERY STEADY YET, BUT I HAVE TO KNOW--

--HOW'S JAN, DOCTOR?
DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, DR. PYM?
COME SEE FOR YOURSELF!

SHE CAME OUT OF IT, JUST LIKE THAT--
--NOT FIVE MINUTES AGO!
RIGHT WHEN I DID!
HI, HONEY.
WHAT'S THIS-- NO FLOWERS?


WE'VE CHECKED HER OUT, AND SHE APPEARS COMPLETELY--
DR. PYM?
MMMM
TIME FOR US TO FADE...!
NEXT
THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THE SQUADRON SUPREME!
AND--A BRAND NEW ARTIST!

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
VERSUS THE
SQUADRON SINISTER!
'NUFF SAID!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

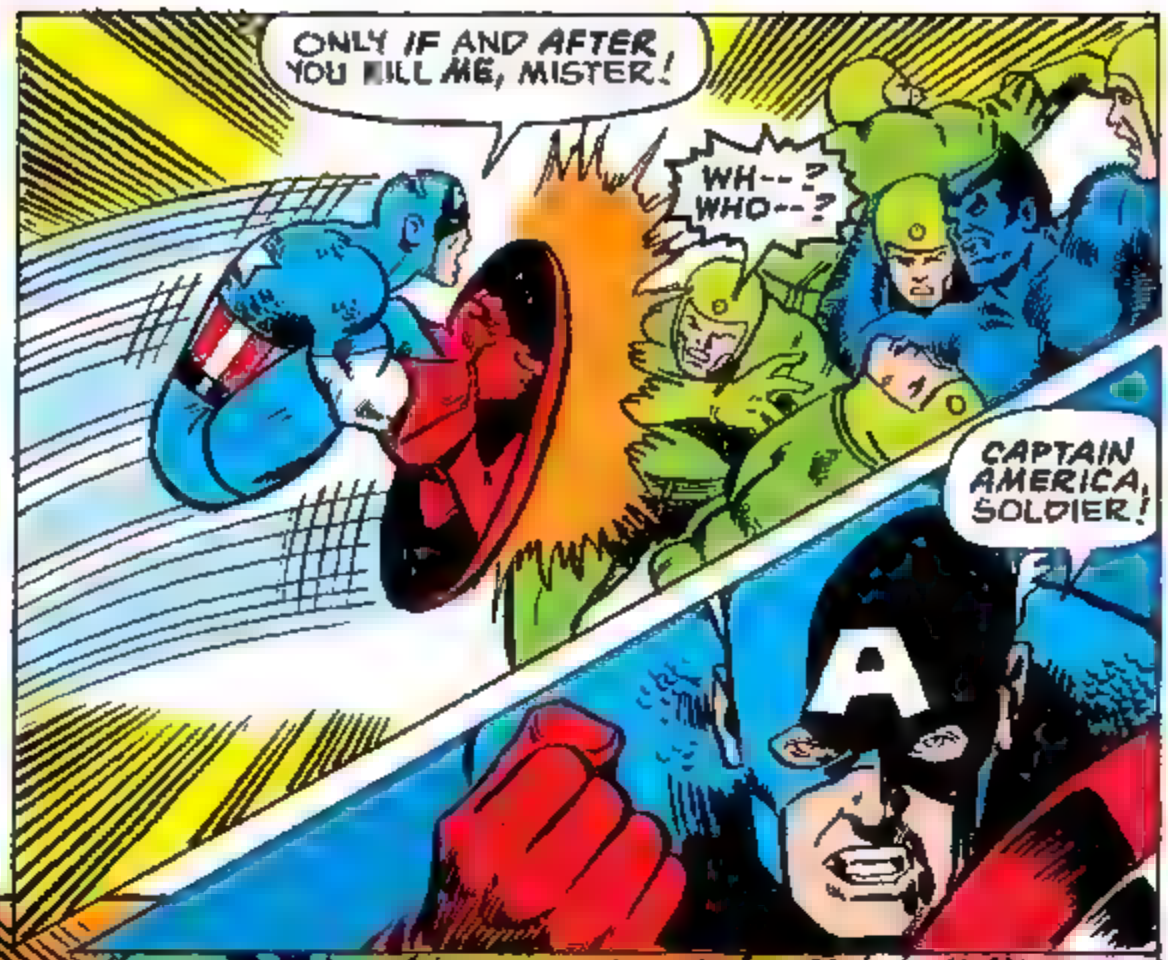
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! ™

STEVE ENGLEHART, AUTHOR | VINNIE COLLETTA, INKER | ORZECHOWSKI, letterer | JANICE COHEN, colorist

MARV WOLFMAN, EDITOR | AND INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST AVENGIN' ACE: GEORGE PEREZ, ARTIST

WELL, IF THIS NIGHT-STRIDER WERE JUST ANY UNWARY TOURIST, A MOST BIZARRE MUGGING WOULD BE HISTORY SOON. HOWEVER, THIS IS THE BEAST.
I TO'T I HOID A PUDDYTAT!
ZYAAA!
I DID! I DID! I DID HOID A PUDDY-TAT!
BUT HE LOOKS MORE LIKE A "MICE" WITH AN ATOMIC BRICK!
THIS IS GOING TO BE AN EXTREMELY BIZARRE MUGGING!
RED UNIT! DUST HIS TAIL. ON THE DOUBLE!
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, MULDOON! I'M LOOKIN' TO BE AN AVENGER, SOON--
OMP!
--SO YOU BETTER LOOK OUT!
I'M AS LIMBER AS YOUR AVERAGE LIMBURGER--
-- AND TWICE AS TRICKY--
--SO WHATEVER YOUR GAME MAY BE, YOU--
CLUNK!
--ARRGHH!
NOW-- WASTE HIM!

THAT BLAST-- LIKE A THOUSAND COLD NEEDLES! CAN'T-- HOLD UP--!
KILL 'IM!


ONLY IF AND AFTER YOU KILL ME, MISTER!
WH--? WHO--?
CAPTAIN AMERICA, SOLDIER!

THANKS, CAP! THAT WAS ALL MY MANIC METABOLISM NEEDED TO RECOVER ITSELF!
YOU DON'T MIND IF I GIVE YOU A HAND, THOUGH, DO YOU?
POK!
BAM!
LISTEN--

BOM!
--BE MY GUEST!
WOP!

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE AS LIBERAL AS YOU, BEAST!
CAN'T YOU EVER STAY OUT OF POLITICS, MAN?

HEY, NO JOKE, CAP-- YOUR SHOWING UP RIGHT THEN GOT ME OUT OF A TIGHT SPOT...

DARE I ASSUME IT WAS ONLY COINCIDENCE?

THERE'S VERY LITTLE COINCIDENCE IN THIS LINE OF WORK, AS YOU WELL KNOW!

NO, I'VE BEEN TAILING THAT CREW'S SERGEANT...!

"YOU SEE, SEVERAL MONTHS BACK, A... FRIEND OF MINE CALLED THE NOMAD * SAVED HUGH JONES, PRESIDENT OF THE ROXXON OIL COMPANY, FROM WARLORD KRANG AND THE SERPENT SQUAD.

BIFF

*ACTUALLY, IT WAS CAP HIMSELF-- IN CA&F #181.--M.

"AT THE TIME, THAT SEEMED LIKE ALL THERE WAS TO IT. BUT LATER, WHEN THE FALCON AND I WERE TEARING UP WASHINGTON SEARCHING FOR THE RED SKULL, JONES JUST DROVE UP AND TOLD US WHERE TO FIND HIM--AS REPAYMENT, HE SAID! *

"HE REFUSED TO TELL ME HOW HE KNEW. ALL HE'D SAY WAS THAT HE HAD SOURCES!

*CA&F #185.-M.

"I HAD THE SKULL ON MY MIND THEN, SO I PUT JONES ON THE BACK BURNER. BUT LATER, AT THE SKULL'S HIDEOUT, STRANGE TROOPS BURST IN AND MASSACRED HIS MEN! *

*DITTO #186. --MARV.

ONCE I GAVE IT SOME THOUGHT, I DID SOME SNOOPING AROUND THE ROXXON BUILDING -- AND TAGGED OUR FRIEND AS A PROBABLE TROOPER.

FOR ME! BUT WHY?

TONIGHT, I WATCHED HIM PICK UP SOME OF HIS PALS, AND GO OUT ON THE PROWL!

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU AND I'VE MET FACE-TO-FACE IN YEARS!

HECK, WE'RE NOT EVEN GOING TO BE CONTEMPORARY AVENGERS--!

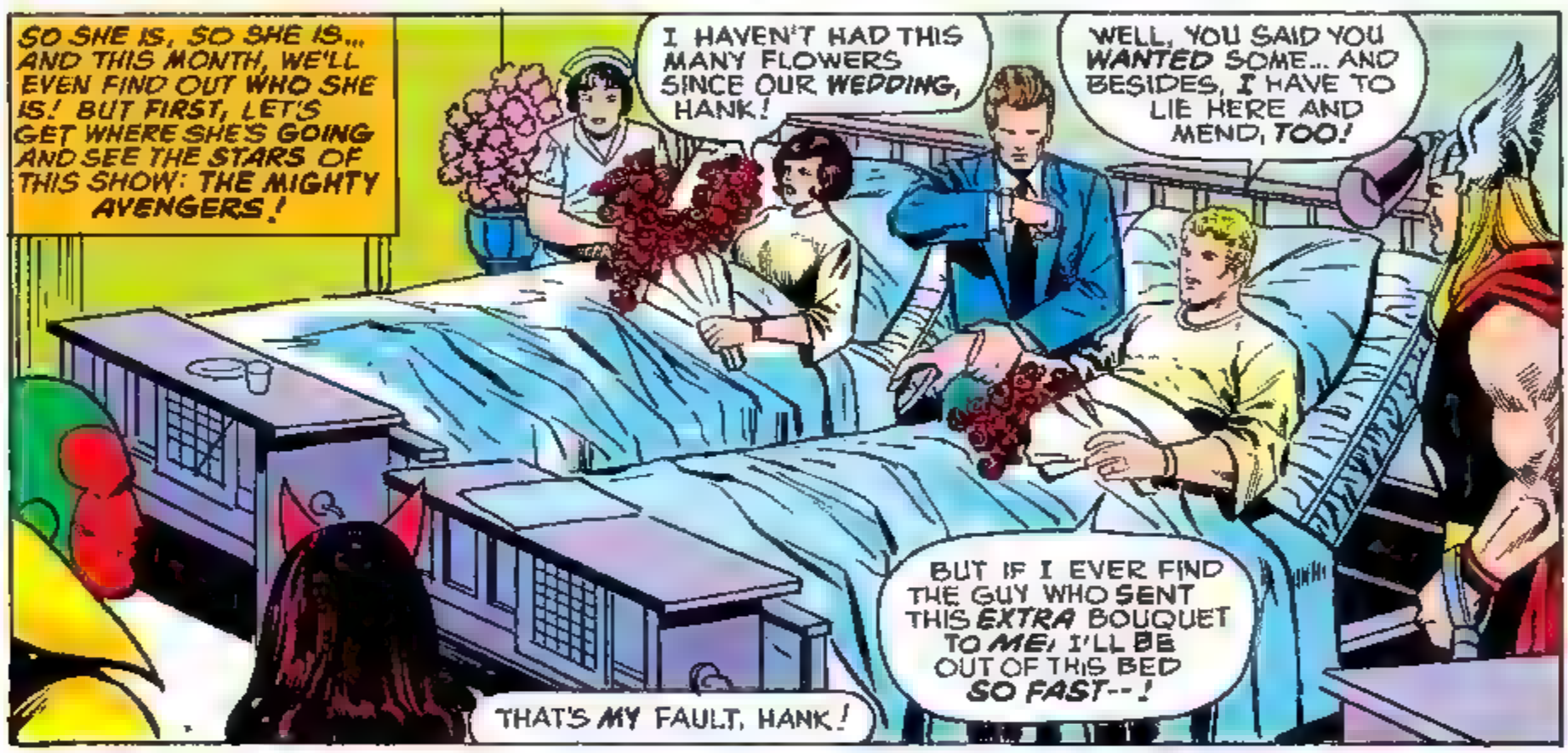
DID YOU SAY-- AVENGERS?

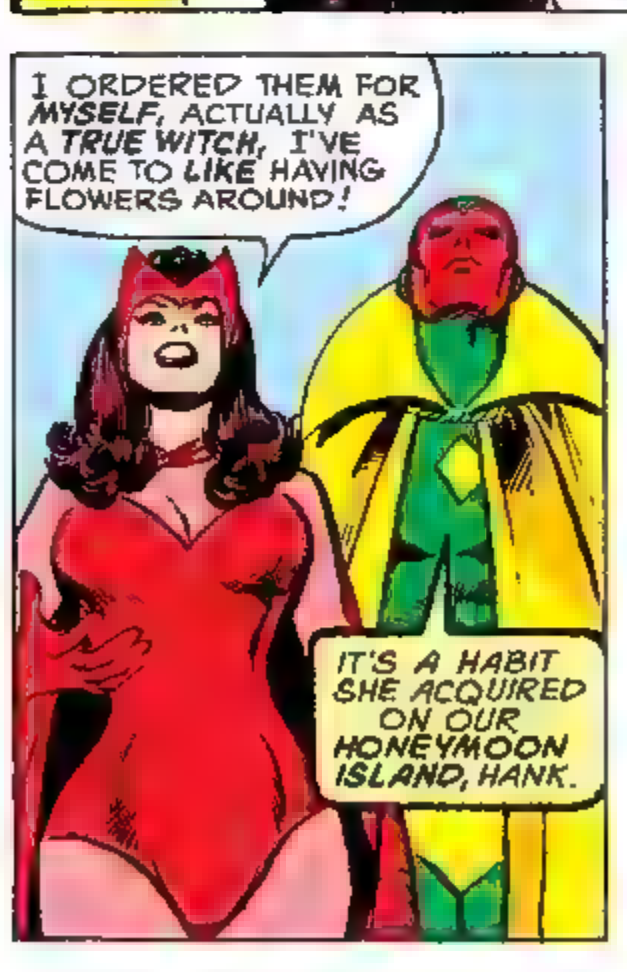
--AVENGERS?
YES, I'M STILL WAITING FOR THEM --OR, AT LEAST, FOR THEIR NEW RECRUIT, THE BEAST!
AND I'LL KEEP WAITING TILL DOOMSDAY, IF I HAVE TO!

PERHAPS IT WON'T TAKE QUITE THAT LONG, MS.
I JUST TUNED IN THE EVENING NEWS AND LEARNED THEY ARE AT MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL.
HOSPITAL?

THE BEAST'S NOT HURT, IS HE?
I BELIEVE IT'S YELLOWJACKET AND THE WASP, MS.

OH, THAT'S GOOD! I MEAN-- THAT'S BAD FOR THE PYMS, BUT GOOD FOR ME!
OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I MEAN! GOODBYE!
AND IT'S "MISS," NOT "MIZ"!
A STRANGE YOUNG WOMAN!


SO SHE IS, SO SHE IS... AND THIS MONTH, WE'LL EVEN FIND OUT WHO SHE IS! BUT FIRST, LET'S GET WHERE SHE'S GOING AND SEE THE STARS OF THIS SHOW: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
I HAVEN'T HAD THIS MANY FLOWERS SINCE OUR WEDDING, HANK!
WELL, YOU SAID YOU WANTED SOME... AND BESIDES, I HAVE TO LIE HERE AND MEND, TOO!
BUT IF I EVER FIND THE GUY WHO SENT THIS EXTRA BOUQUET TO ME, I'LL BE OUT OF THIS BED SO FAST--!
THAT'S MY FAULT, HANK!


I ORDERED THEM FOR MYSELF, ACTUALLY AS A TRUE WITCH, I'VE COME TO LIKE HAVING FLOWERS AROUND!
IT'S A HABIT SHE ACQUIRED ON OUR HONEYMOON ISLAND, HANK.

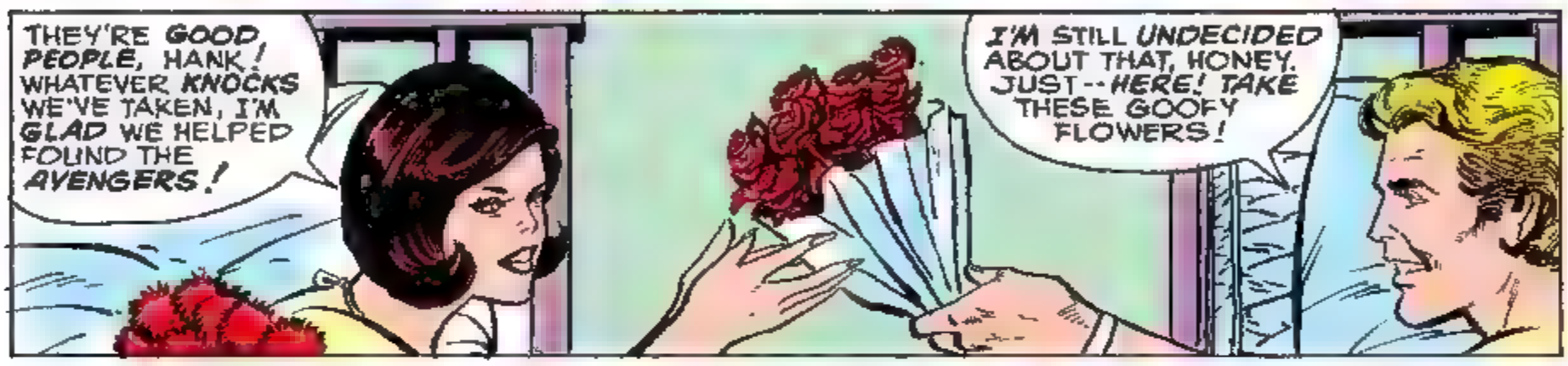
I KNEW SHE COULDN'T COME BACK TO NEW YORK WITHOUT---
POK
EXCUSE ME!

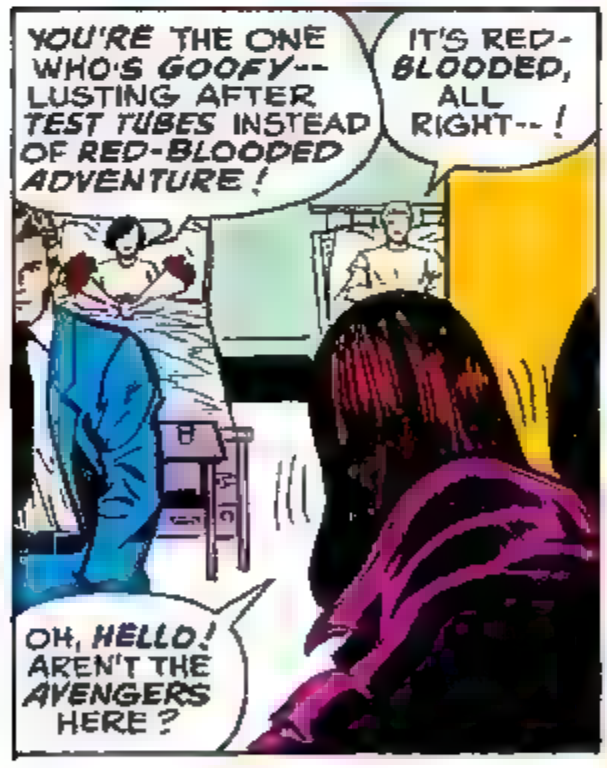
SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT THE BEAST AND I ARE IN HOT PURSUIT OF A PRIVATE ARMY!
THIS IS AVENGERS BUSINESS! CAN WE TALK?

SORRY TO CUT THIS SO SHORT, PEOPLE, BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR, YOU NEED THE REST ANYWAY.
OKAY, CAP! HAVE FUN-- BUT STOP BACK AGAIN!
WE HAVEN'T HAD A CHAT IN MONTHS!

GOOD, THEN!
FAREWELL, PYMS! WE LEAVE YE NOW!

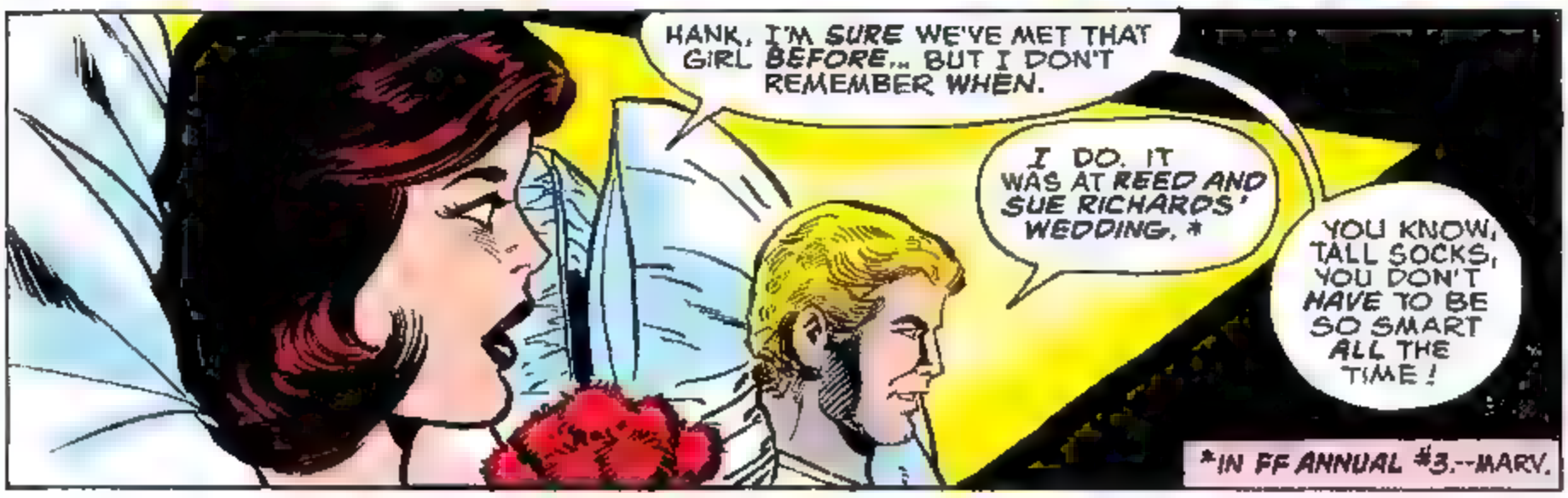
"AVENGERS BUSINESS"! HATH THE STAR-SPANGLED AVENGER RETURNED TO US AT LAST?
TAKE CARE, YOU TWO. AND HANK...
...DITCH THOSE ROSES, HUH?
MAY THE POWER WITHIN YOU GROW!


THEY'RE GOOD PEOPLE, HANK! WHATEVER KNOCKS WE'VE TAKEN, I'M GLAD WE HELPED FOUND THE AVENGERS!
I'M STILL UNDECIDED ABOUT THAT, HONEY. JUST--HERE! TAKE THESE GOOFY FLOWERS!


YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GOOFY-- LUSTING AFTER TEST TUBES INSTEAD OF RED-BLOODED ADVENTURE!
IT'S RED-BLOODED, ALL RIGHT--!
OH, HELLO! AREN'T THE AVENGERS HERE?

NO, I'M SORRY, MISS.
YOU JUST MISSED THEM. THEY'RE HEADED FOR THEIR MANSION.

WAIT! DON'T I KNOW YOU--?
YES! THANKS! GOOD-BYE!


HANK, I'M SURE WE'VE MET THAT GIRL BEFORE... BUT I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN.
I DO. IT WAS AT REED AND SUE RICHARDS' WEDDING. *
YOU KNOW, TALL SOCKS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO SMART ALL THE TIME!
*IN FF ANNUAL #3.--MARV.

MEANWHILE, ON THE STREETS TO HOME...

THERE'S SOME TIE-IN BETWEEN ROXXON OIL AND THE BRAND CORPORATION! TONIGHT'S ACTION PROVED IT!

THIS IS A CASE THE FALCON SHOULD STEER CLEAR OF, SINCE IT HITS SO CLOSE TO THE CORE OF HIS NEW PERSONALITY--*

--AND SINCE THE AVENGERS WERE ALREADY INVOLVED, I THOUGHT IT WAS TIME TO JOIN FORCES AGAIN!

'TIS GOOD THAT THOU DIDST, CAPTAIN. YET--HOLD!

*AGAIN, IT WAS IN CAGF #186.--MARV

WHAT NOW TRANSPIRES TO EXCITE THE CROWD?

LOOK!

IT'S A QUINJET!

AND THAT MEANS IRON MAN AND MOON-DRAGON ARE BACK-- WITH OR WITHOUT THE MISSING HAWKEYE!

LET'S HOPE WE DON'T HAVE A DOUBLE CRISIS ON OUR HANDS!

THEY QUICKEN THEIR PACE TOWARD THEIR HEADQUARTERS, AS THOR FILLS IN CAP ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE BOWMAN'S STRANGE ABSENCE...

GOOD EVENING, SIR. THERE WAS A YOUNG LADY--

ENOUGH, JARVIS LATER.

HOWDY, PEOPLE. IT LOOKS LIKE WE TIMED OUR ARRIVAL ABOUT RIGHT

WELL, HI, LOVE-BIRDS! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU BACK SO SOON! THAT WAS A SHORT HONEYMOON!

WE KNOW, IRON MAN.

YE ARE BUT TWAIN, AVENGER. HAWKEYE, THEN, IS LOST?

WORSE THAN THAT, THUNDER GOD!

IF OUR SUSPICIONS ARE CORRECT, YOUR FRIEND HAS BEEN TRAPPED IN TIME --TO LURE THE REST OF US TO OUR DOOM!

IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH OF A GENIUS TO FIGURE OUT WHO DID IT, EITHER!

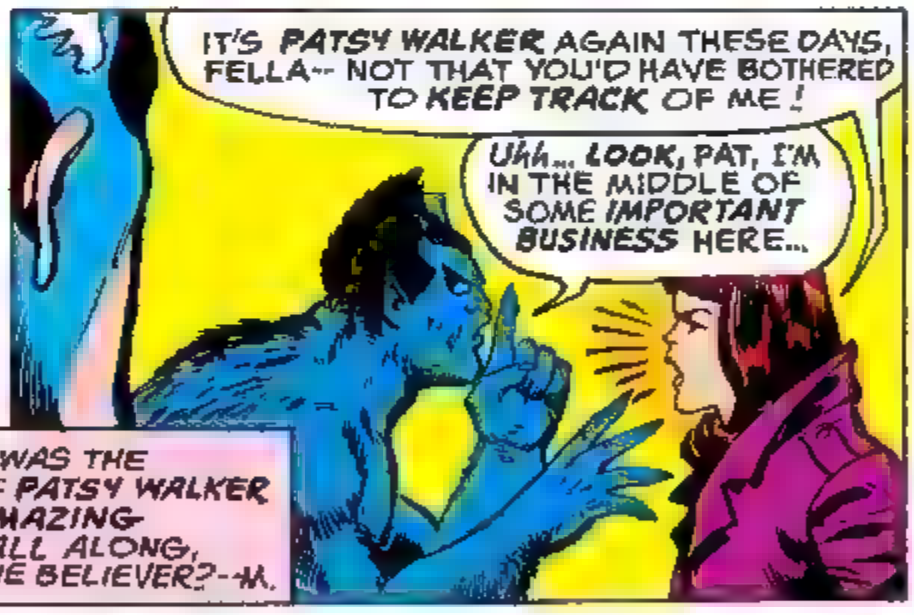
WE'VE BEEN HAD BY KANG THE CONQUEROR!
AGAIN! THIS IS GETTING MONOTONOUS!
DIDN'T ANY OF YOU SUSPECT IT MIGHT HAPPEN?
WHO COULD EXPECT THE MAN TO BE OBSESSED?
FOR THAT REASON, THOR, WE ALONE SHOULD SEEK KANG!

AS GODS, YOU AND I ARE EASILY THE BEST SUITED TO THE TASK.
THAT'S FINE WITH ME, THOR. IF I'VE WALKED INTO AN ON-GOING SITUATION...
...YOU'LL HAVE TO SPLIT THE TEAM ANYWAY...

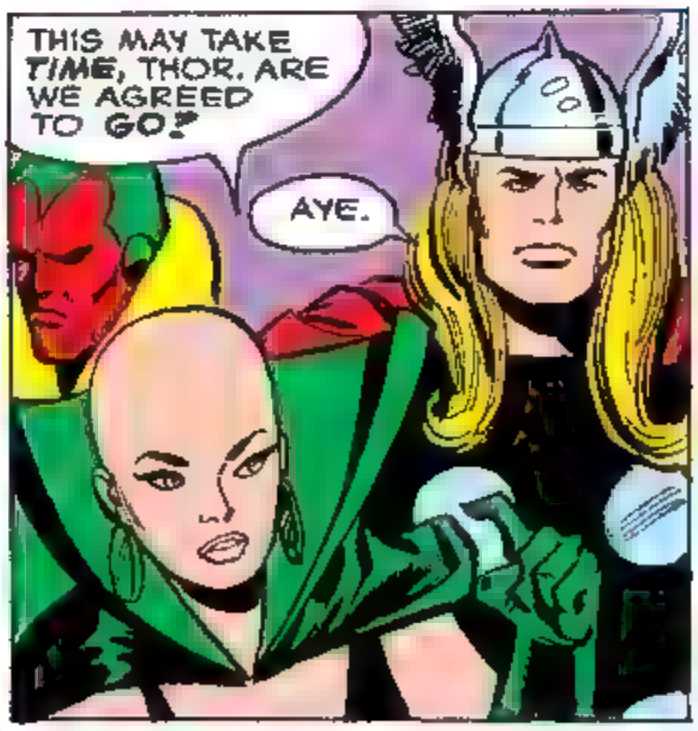
...AND WHAT I MOSTLY NEED IS NUMBERS! IF--
SO THERE YOU ARE!

NO BUTLER'S GOING TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM YOU THIS TIME!
YOU'RE MINE AT LAST, BEAST!

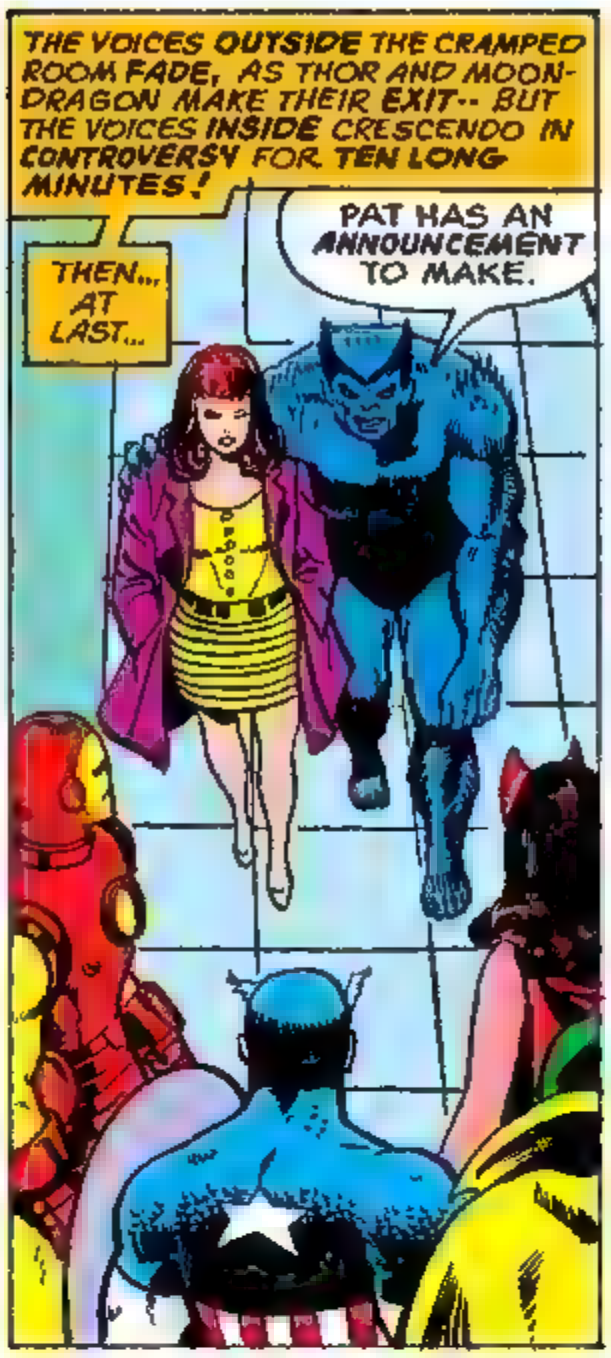
OH MY HEAVENLY DAYS!
PATSY BAXTER!*
*YOU KNEW IT WAS THE FORMER STAR OF PATSY WALKER COMICS AND AMAMAZING ADVENTURES ALL ALONG, DIDN'T YOU, TRUE BELIEVER?--M.


IT'S PATSY WALKER AGAIN THESE DAYS, FELLA-- NOT THAT YOU'D HAVE BOTHERED TO KEEP TRACK OF ME!
Uhh... LOOK, PAT, I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME IMPORTANT BUSINESS HERE...

AHH, THE HECK WITH IT! YOU CAUGHT ME, FAIR AND SQUARE!
COME ON IN THE NEXT ROOM. WE CAN TALK IN THERE-- IN PRIVATE!


THIS MAY TAKE TIME, THOR. ARE WE AGREED TO GO?
AYE.

FAREWELL, CAPTAIN AMERICA
BEST LUCK TO YOU, THUNDER GOD!
OKAY, BEAST; TALK TURKEY!

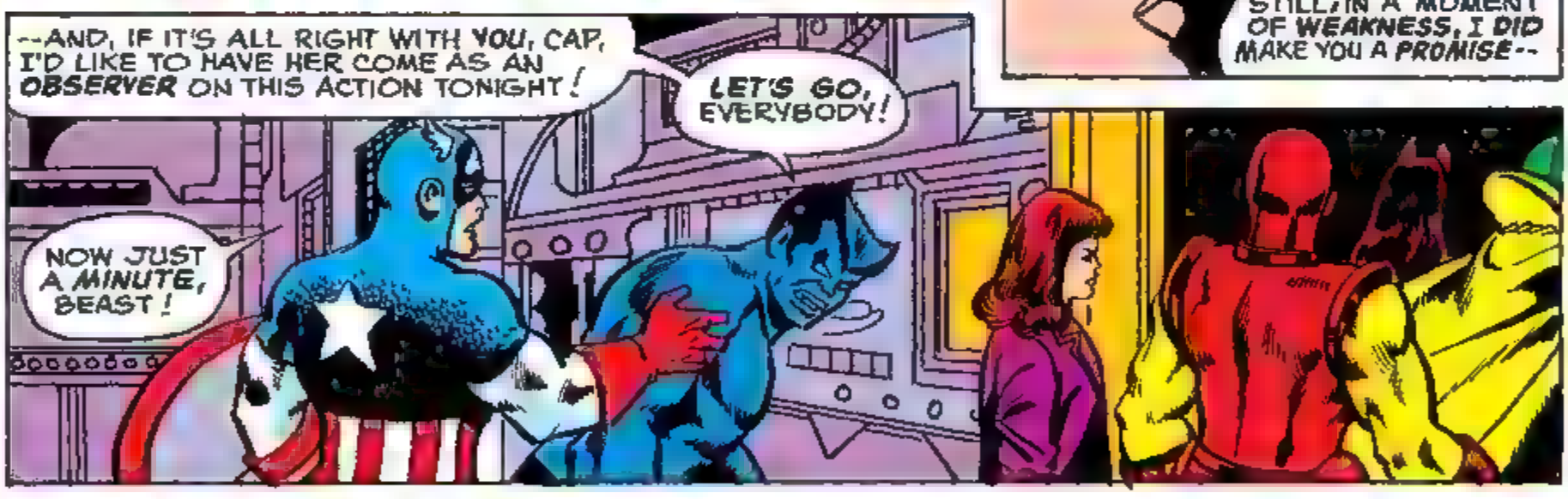

THE VOICES OUTSIDE THE CRAMPED ROOM FADE, AS THOR AND MOON-DRAGON MAKE THEIR EXIT-- BUT THE VOICES INSIDE CRESCENDO IN CONTROVERSY FOR TEN LONG MINUTES!
THEN... AT LAST...
PAT HAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE.

GO AHEAD, PAT -- DON'T BE SHY.
JUST YOU WATCH ME! LISTEN, EVERYBODY--
--THE BEAST IS REALLY HANK McCOY!

SO?
MISS, WE KNOW THAT ALREADY!

Y-YOU DO?
THEY DO. I TOLD 'EM. WHO CARES?
I DON'T HAVE A SECRET I.D. ANY MORE--

--SO YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO HOLD OVER MY HEAD ANY MORE!
STILL, IN A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS, I DID MAKE YOU A PROMISE--


--AND, IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, CAP, I'D LIKE TO HAVE HER COME AS AN OBSERVER ON THIS ACTION TONIGHT!
LET'S GO, EVERYBODY!
NOW JUST A MINUTE, BEAST!

AS I UNDERSTAND IT, YOU HAVEN'T BEEN OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AN AVENGER.
NO, BUT I HOPE YOU'LL PLAY ALONG WITH ME.

I WANT TO SHOW HER WHAT SUPER-HEROING INVOLVES, FOR REASONS OF MY OWN!
BUT EVEN OBSERVATION MIGHT BE DANGEROUS!

MAYBE -- BUT DESPITE HER SCHOOL-GIRL CHARM, PAT WALKER'S GOT GRIT!
ANYWAY, DIDN'T YOU ONCE TAKE A KID NAMED RICK JONES AROUND WITH YOU? BESIDES, I'LL WATCH OUT FOR HER.
THAT'S TRUE...

AND SO, THE AVENGERS BEGIN SIMULTANEOUS OPERATIONS-- BOTH OF WHICH ARE DESTINED TO SHAKE THEM TO THEIR VERY SOULS!

I DID AGREE TO GO WITH THEE, PRIESTESS, BECAUSE I HAVE SWORN VENGEANCE UPON THIS VILLAIN FROM THE VOID--

--BUT I MUST INSIST THAT THOU DOST MENTION MY GODHOOD NO MORE!

YOU DISLIKE BEING CALLED A GOD BEFORE MEN, EH?

YOU ARE SO--SO--

--EGALITARIAN!

SNAP

WITH BARELY A FURROWED BROW, THE MYSTERIOUS TITANESS FIRES A BRAIN BOLT ACROSS COUNTLESS CENTURIES!

DESPITE HIMSELF, THOR STANDS ASTOUNDED AT SUCH UNGUESSED POWER-- AND THE EASE WITH WHICH IT WAS WIELDED!

WHO CALLS--

--IMMORTUS!!

ONE WHO LEARNED YOUR BRAIN PATTERNS WHEN LAST WE MET, O MASTER OF TIME!

TWO WHO SEEK KANG THE CONQUEROR!

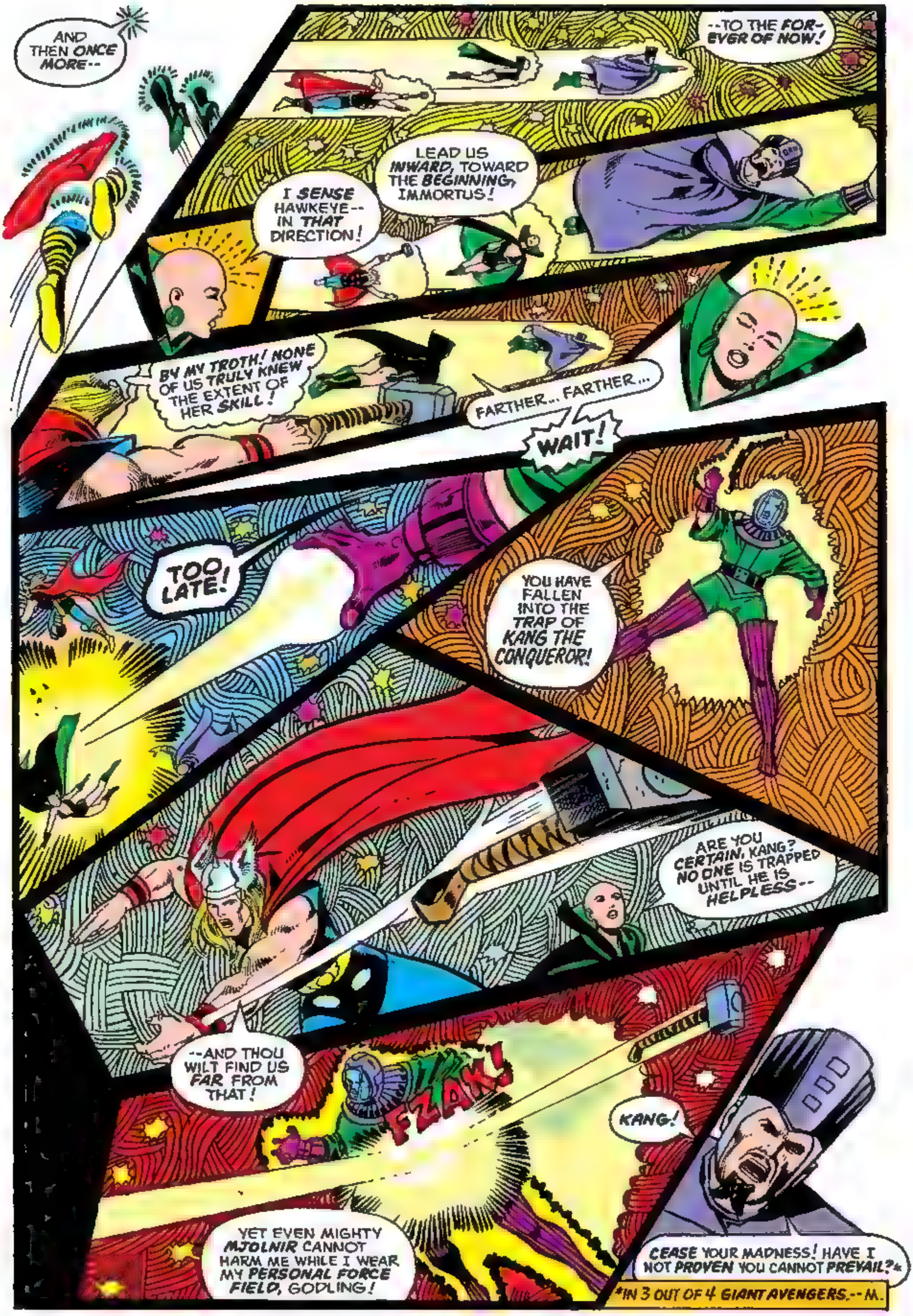
YOU WISH FOR ME TO TRANSPORT YOU THROUGH TIME?

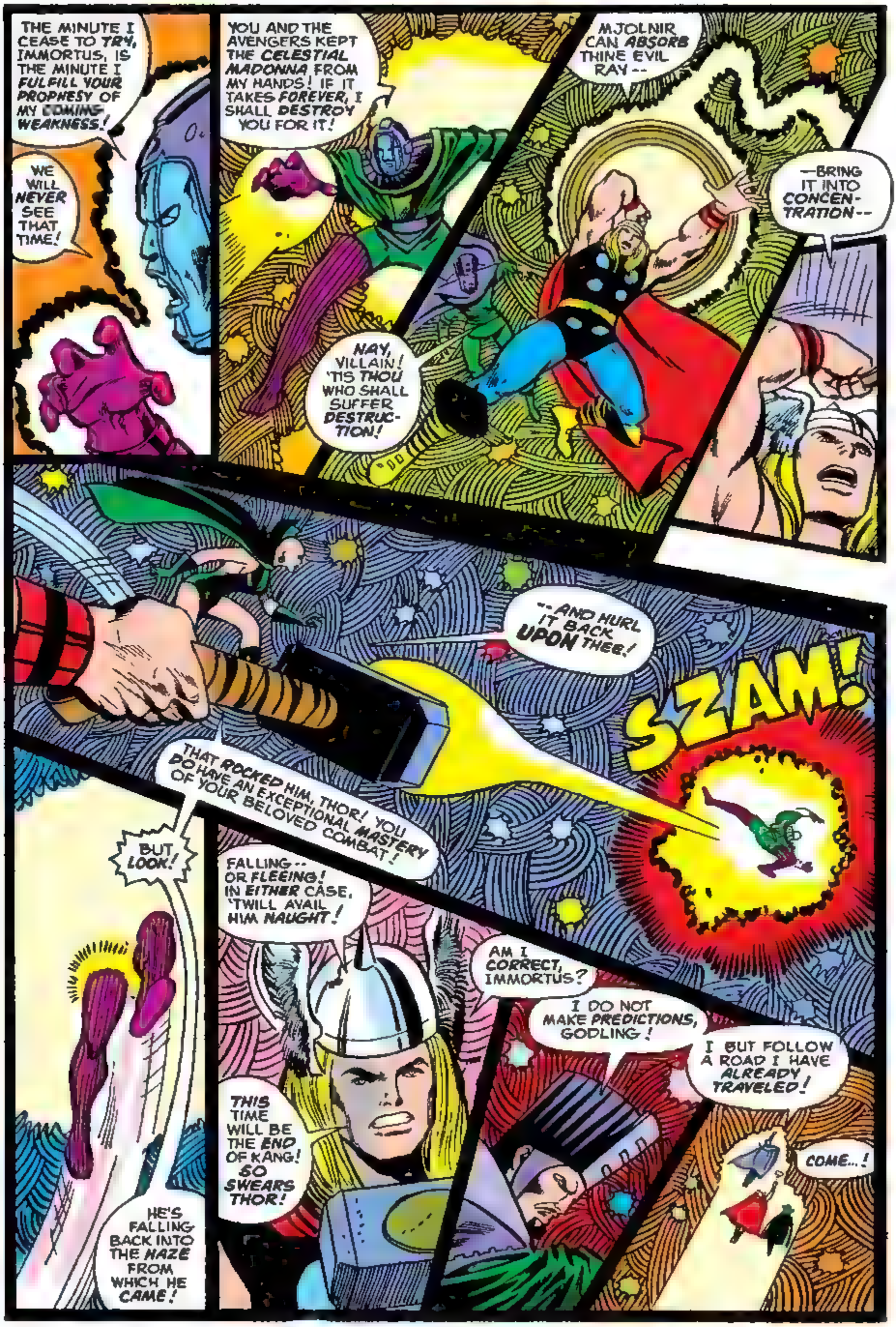
YOU HAVE AIDED THE AVENGERS BEFORE--

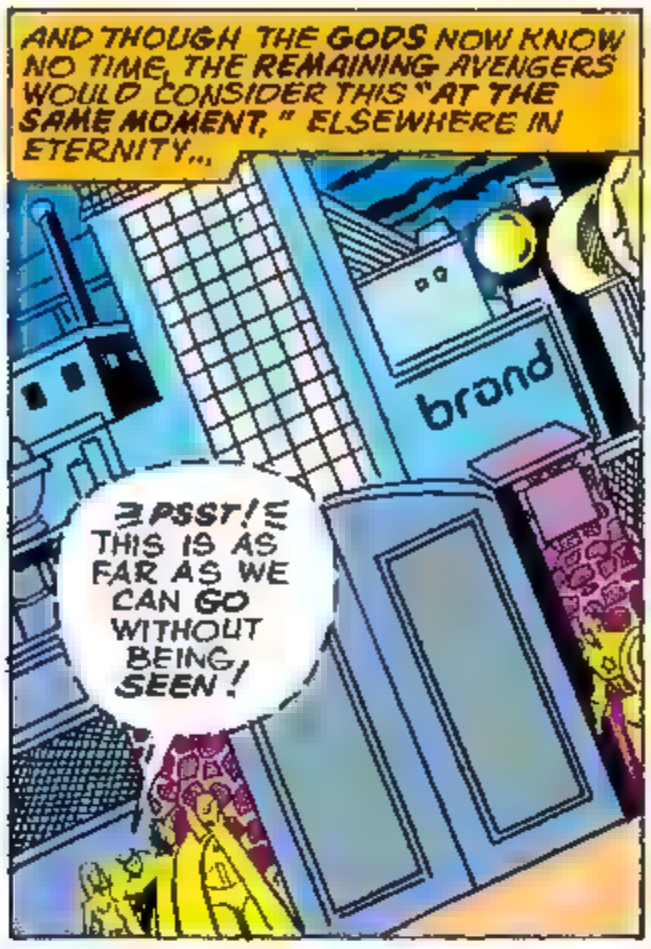
SO BE IT! FOLLOW MY IMAGE FROM YOUR ERA--

--AND WE WOULD AVOID MECHANICAL TIME MACHINES!

--TO THE PRESENT OF FOREVER!

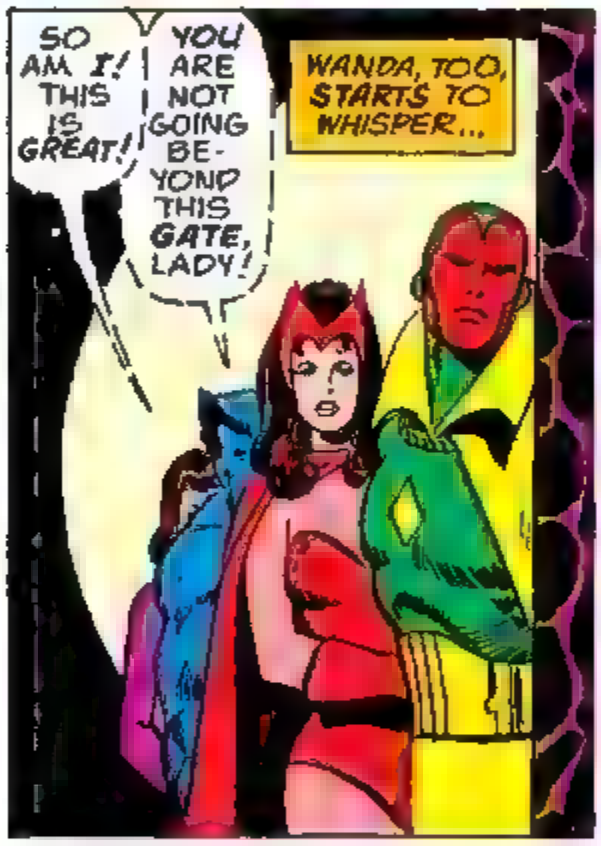

AND THEN ONCE MORE--
--TO THE FOR-EVER OF NOW!
LEAD US INWARD, TOWARD THE BEGINNING, IMMORTUS!
I SENSE HAWKEYE-- IN THAT DIRECTION!
BY MY TROTH! NONE OF US TRULY KNEW THE EXTENT OF HER SKILL!
FARTHER... FARTHER...
WAIT!
TOO LATE!
YOU HAVE FALLEN INTO THE TRAP OF KANG THE CONQUEROR!
ARE YOU CERTAIN, KANG? NO ONE IS TRAPPED UNTIL HE IS HELPLESS--
--AND THOU WILT FIND US FAR FROM THAT!
FZAK!
KANG!
YET EVEN MIGHTY MJOLNIR CANNOT HARM ME WHILE I WEAR MY PERSONAL FORCE FIELD, GODLING!
CEASE YOUR MADNESS! HAVE I NOT PROVEN YOU CANNOT PREVAIL?*
*IN 3 OUT OF 4 GIANT AVENGERS.--M.


THE MINUTE I CEASE TO TRY, IMMORTUS, IS THE MINUTE I FULFILL YOUR PROPHESY OF MY COMING WEAKNESS!
WE WILL NEVER SEE THAT TIME!
YOU AND THE AVENGERS KEPT THE CELESTIAL MADONNA FROM MY HANDS! IF IT TAKES FOREVER, I SHALL DESTROY YOU FOR IT!
NAY, VILLAIN! 'TIS THOU WHO SHALL SUFFER DESTRUCTION!
MJOLNIR CAN ABSORB THINE EVIL RAY--
—BRING IT INTO CONCENTRATION--
--AND HURL IT BACK UPON THEE!
SZAM!
THAT ROCKED HIM, THOR! YOU DO HAVE AN EXCEPTIONAL MASTERY OF YOUR BELOVED COMBAT!
BUT LOOK!
HE'S FALLING BACK INTO THE HAZE FROM WHICH HE CAME!
FALLING-- OR FLEEING! IN EITHER CASE, 'TWILL AVAIL HIM NAUGHT!
THIS TIME WILL BE THE END OF KANG! SO SWEARS THOR!
AM I CORRECT, IMMORTUS?
I DO NOT MAKE PREDICTIONS, GODLING!
I BUT FOLLOW A ROAD I HAVE ALREADY TRAVELED!
COME...!


AND THOUGH THE GODS NOW KNOW NO TIME, THE REMAINING AVENGERS WOULD CONSIDER THIS "AT THE SAME MOMENT," ELSEWHERE IN ETERNITY...
brand
PSST! THIS IS AS FAR AS WE CAN GO WITHOUT BEING SEEN!

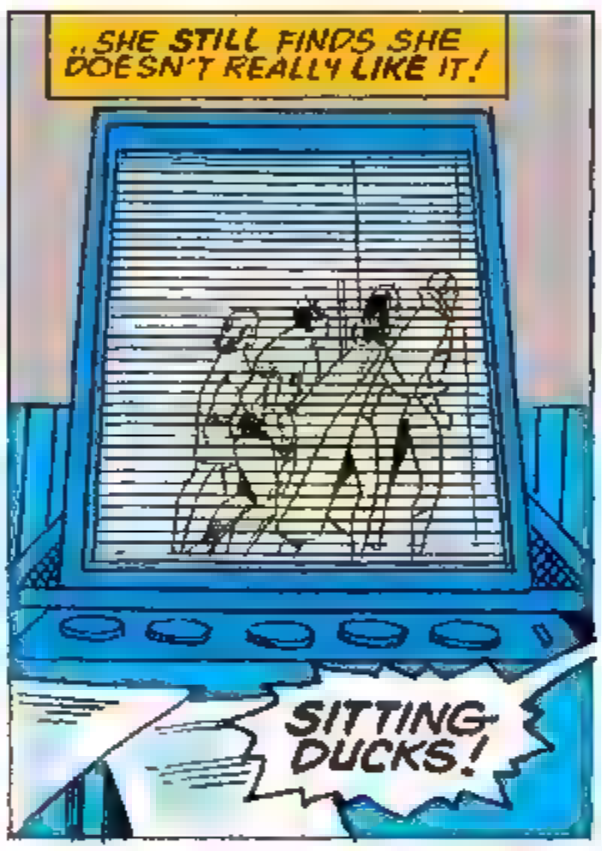
IF THE BEAST AND I ARE RIGHT, SHELLHEAD, THERE'S AT LEAST PART OF AN ARMY IN THERE!
FIVE SUPER-HEROES SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE THEM, BUT IT'S STILL GOING TO BE A FIGHT!
LISTEN, CAP--

--STARK INDUSTRIES HAS DEALT WITH BRAND, AND WE GOT BITTEN BADLY! I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THEY PLAYED THE GAME TOO FAST AND LOOSE!
THAT--AND YOUR SMILING FACE--ARE WHAT KEPT ME HERE WHEN I COULD HAVE GONE AFTER HAWK-EYE AND KANG!
I'M WITH YOU ALL THE WAY!


SO AM I! THIS IS GREAT!
YOU ARE NOT GOING BE-YOND THIS GATE, LADY!
WANDA, TOO, STARTS TO WHISPER...

...BUT THEN STOPS, AND THINKS INSTEAD...
...OF HER SHORTENED HONEYMOON...

...AND THE VISION'S SWIFT RETURN OF THEM TO THE AVENGER'S LIFE.
AGLOW WITH LOVE AS SHE IS...

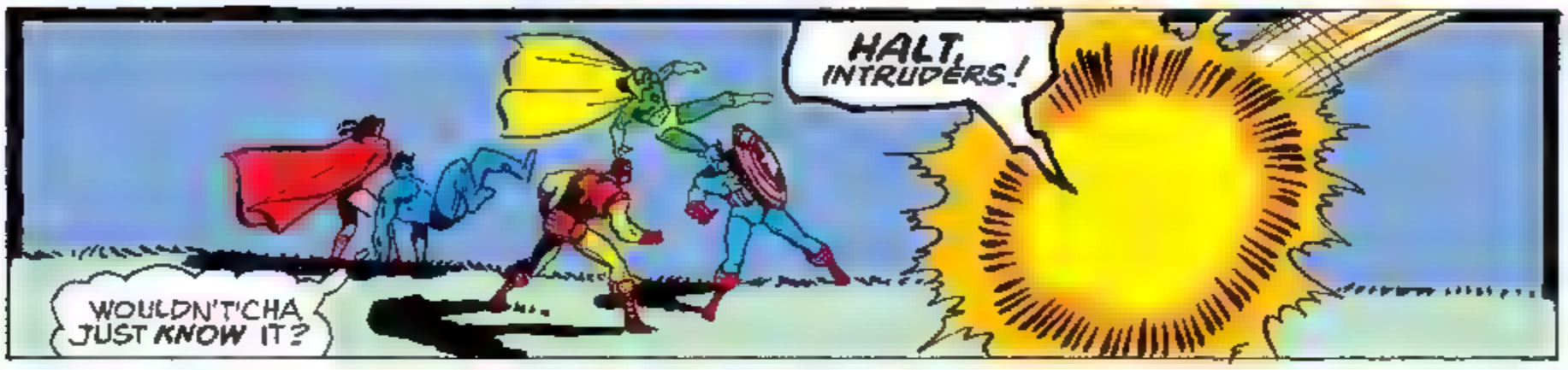

...SHE STILL FINDS SHE DOESN'T REALLY LIKE IT!
SITTING DUCKS!

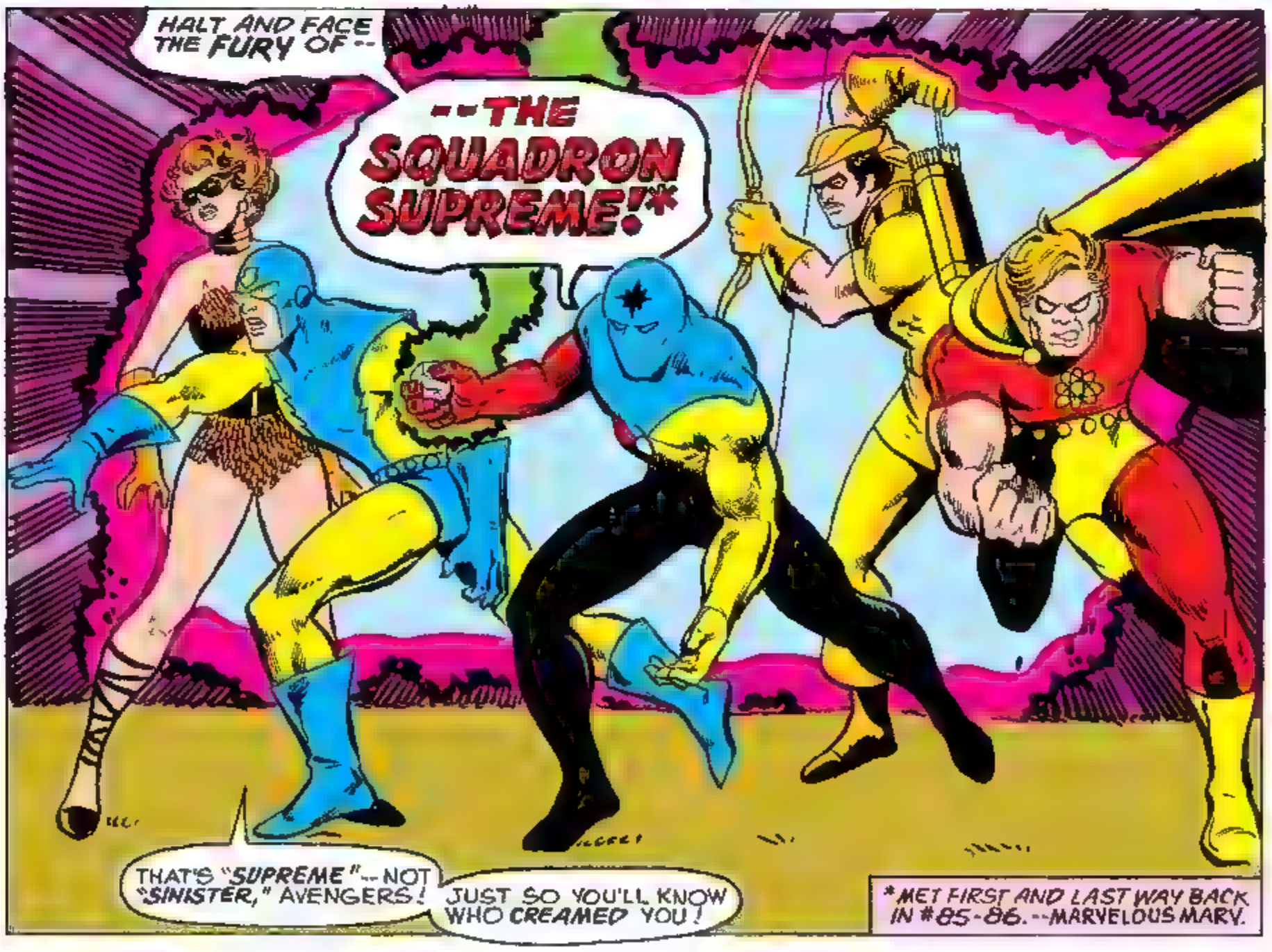
THE BEAST, THERE, MUST THINK OUR SECURITY IS STILL AT ITS 1973 LEVEL, EH, COLONEL?
THAT'S AFFIRMATIVE, MR. JONES!
HE COULDN'T KNOW--

--WHAT ROXXON AND BRAND CAN DO WHEN THEY PUT---
HEY! COLONEL!

ISN'T THAT YOUR WIFE WITH THEM?
GOOD LORD! IT IS!
BUT WHATEVER HARE-BRAINED SCHEME THAT TWERP'S GOT COOKING THIS TIME--

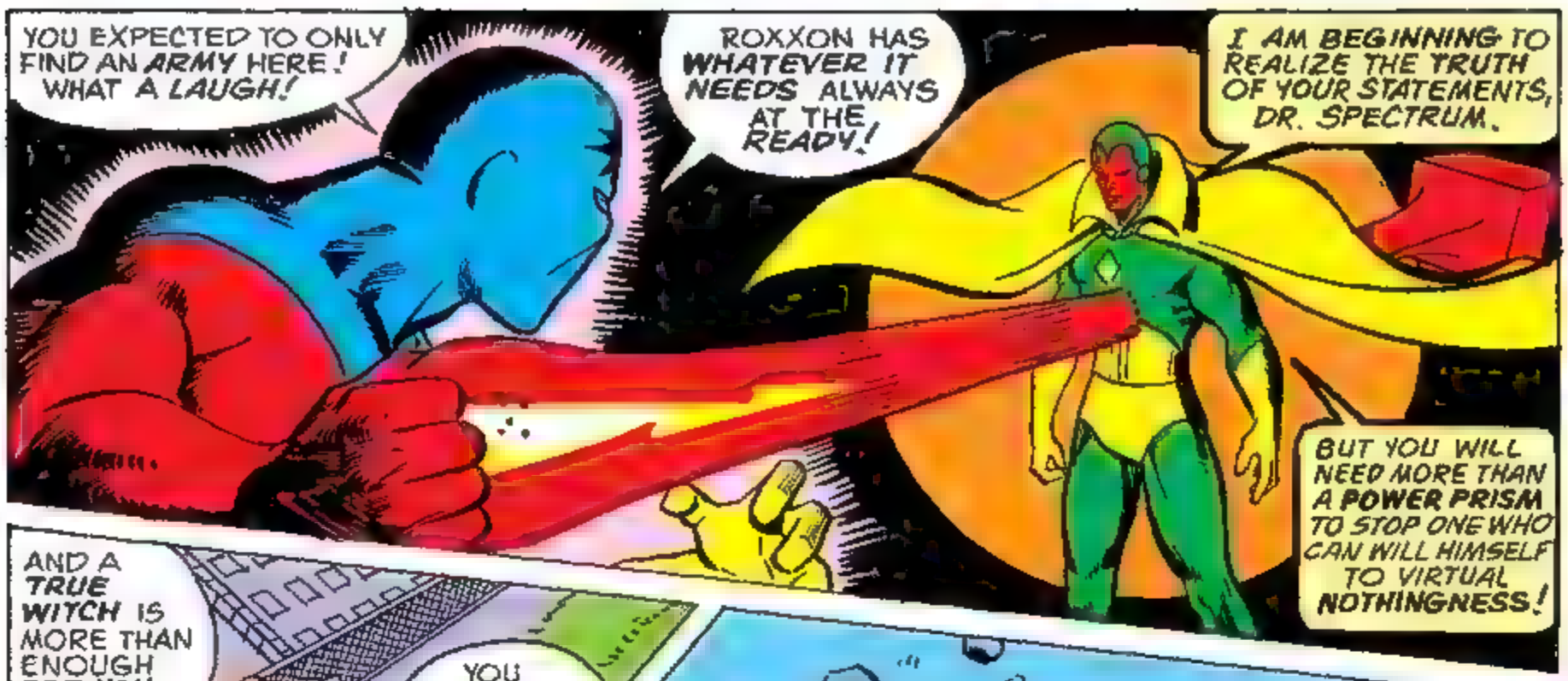
--IT WON'T SLOW COLONEL BUZZ BAXTER!
ANYWAY, SHE'S MY EX-WIFE!





*MET FIRST AND LAST WAY BACK IN #85-86.--MARVELOUS MARV.

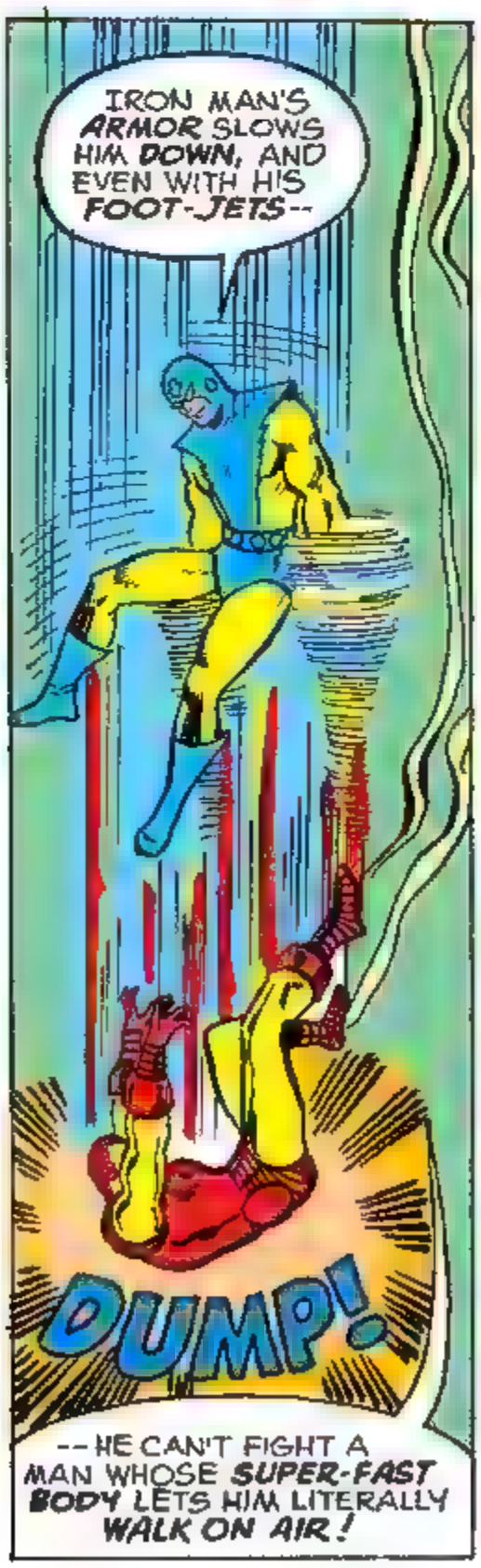
BUT-- THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE! THE SQUADRON SINISTER WAS A CREATION OF THE GRAND-MASTER!* THOSE MEN WERE EVIL--
--BUT THE SQUADRON SUPREME, THOUGH THEY LOOKED SIMILAR, WERE ACTUALLY HEROES FROM A PARALLEL DIMENSION!
AND YOU--
--YOU LOOK LIKE THE GOLDEN ARCHER,** WHO WAS ONLY A DISGUISE OF HAWKEYE'S!
*#69-71 **CA #179 --M.
WOW!
THAT'S WHY I CHOSE THE NAME, GOV'NOR!
ON MY WORLD, H'I WAS CALLED 'AWKEYE--BUT 'ERE, H'I HAD TO AVOID CONFUSION!
H'IT WAS A GOOD JOKE TO TAKE HIS NAME AND COSTUME, WOT?
G.A. ALWAYS OVERREACTS! IT'S HIS TRADEMARK!
ALL YOU AVENGERS WILL BE JUST MEMORIES SOON, ANYWAY!
BAM!
THE WHIZZER LIVES UP TO HIS NAME! WITHOUT QUICKSILVER AROUND, I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT SPEED CAN MEAN!
HAVE TO SHARPEN UP, OR I'LL LEAVE MYSELF WIDE OPEN
NNGH
IN CASE YOU'RE STILL IN THE DARK, IRON JAWS, I'LL PUT IT IN WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE:--
--WE SOLD OUT!
I THOUGHT I SMELLED SOMETHING ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF ROXXON!
BOM!
YOU SHAN'T INSULT THE SQUADRON SUPREME, CREATURE! SO SWEARS HYPERION!
THAT'S ALL HYPE!
POW!

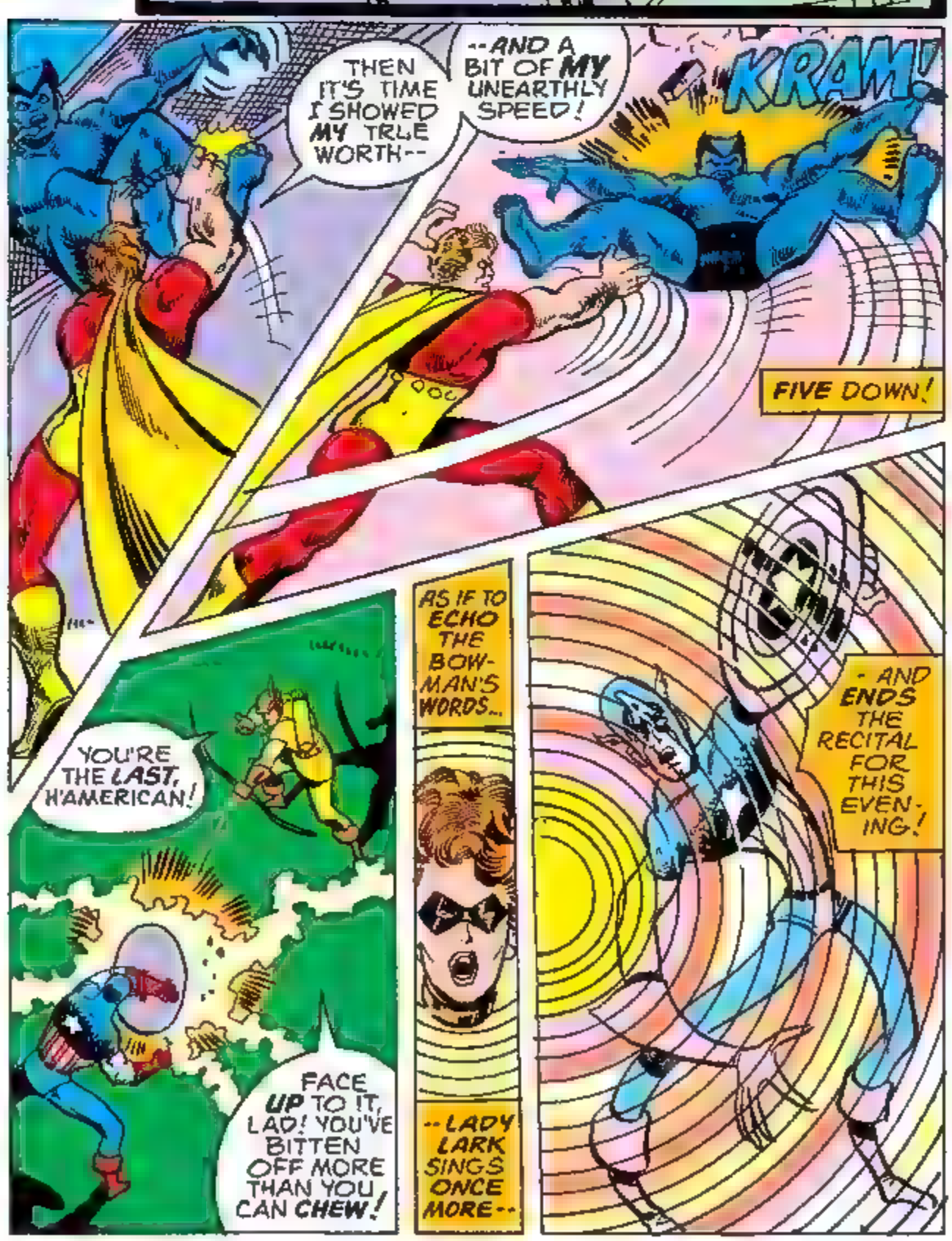

YOU EXPECTED TO ONLY FIND AN ARMY HERE! WHAT A LAUGH!
ROXXON HAS WHATEVER IT NEEDS ALWAYS AT THE READY!
I AM BEGINNING TO REALIZE THE TRUTH OF YOUR STATEMENTS, DR. SPECTRUM.
BUT YOU WILL NEED MORE THAN A POWER PRISM TO STOP ONE WHO CAN WILL HIMSELF TO VIRTUAL NOTHINGNESS!

AND A TRUE WITCH IS MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR YOU, LADY LARK!
YOU REMEMBER ME, THEN?
NO--I REMEMBER A BETTER WOMAN!
ONE TOUCH OF HER OUT-STRETCHED HANDS--
WOK!
--AND THE LIVING EARTH BENEATH THE LADY'S SANDLES EXPLODES!
SO, AT THAT POINT, DOES PAT BAXTER!
YOU WERE TOLD TO STAY BACK, PAT!
I WANT SOME OF THIS ACTION, WITCH!
AND THUS ARE THE TIDES OF BATTLE TURNED--FOR BEFORE WANDA CAN FOLLOW UP HER FIRST HEX--
--LADY LARK EMITS A SINGLE, SHRILLING SOUND--
--A SOUND TO DISTORT ALL THOUGHT--
--AND ALL MATTER!
TWO DOWN!

WANDA!
IF THE SCARLET WITCH COULD SEE HER HUSBAND NOW, SHE'D KNOW HOW MUCH HE LOVES HER!

BUT SHE'S AS UNCONSCIOUS... AS HE IS!
THAT'S THREE DOWN! HOW FARES THE WHIZZER?
ALMOST DONE, DOC!


IRON MAN'S ARMOR SLOWS HIM DOWN, AND EVEN WITH HIS FOOT-JETS--
DUMP!
--HE CAN'T FIGHT A MAN WHOSE SUPER-FAST BODY LETS HIM LITERALLY WALK ON AIR!


THEN IT'S TIME I SHOWED MY TRUE WORTH--
--AND A BIT OF MY UNEARTHLY SPEED!
KRAM!
FIVE DOWN!
YOU'RE THE LAST, H'AMERICAN!
FACE UP TO IT, LAD! YOU'VE BITTEN OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW!
AS IF TO ECHO THE BOW-MAN'S WORDS...
--LADY LARK SINGS ONCE MORE--
- AND ENDS THE RECITAL FOR THIS EVEN-ING!

THAT GOT THEM **ALL**, COLONEL BAXTER! AFTER OUR TROOPS' FAILURE **EARLIER** TONIGHT, WE **NEEDED** A **STRONG DEFENSE**--

--AND, AS ALWAYS, YOU'VE **PROVIDED** IT!

BUT I **STILL** DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR **EX-WIFE** IS DOING HERE!

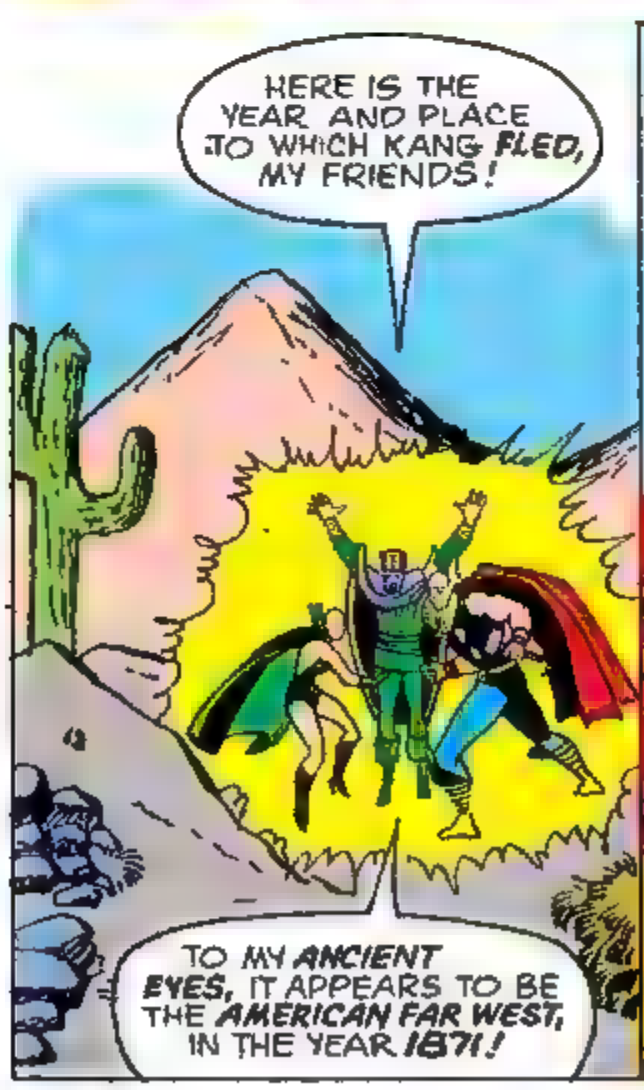
NEITHER DO **I**, MR. JONES--THOUGH I ALWAYS **SENSED** THAT SHE HAD SOME **CONNECTION**-- A **PACT**, OR SOMETHING-- WITH THE **BEAST**!

WELL, ONCE THE SQUADRON SUPREME DELIVERS THEIR **PRISONERS** TO THE **ESCAPE-PROOF CELL** DR. SPECTRUM AND BRAND CORPORATION **TECHNOLOGY** COOKED UP--

-- I'M **SURE** WE'LL GET **ANY ANSWERS WE WANT**!

THEN, WE'LL BEGIN OUR **FINAL MARCH TO VICTORY**-- AND **NO ONE** WILL BE ABLE TO **STOP** US!

*AND THE **TRUTH** OR **FALSITY** OF THE COLONEL'S WORDS WILL BE SHOWN IN THE **COMING MONTHS**, MARVELITE-- AS WILL THE **RESULTS** OF--*



*WHO--OR **WHAT**--IS SO INCREDIBLE? WE'D BE ONLY **TOO HAPPY** TO TELL YOU **RIGHT NOW**-- BUT WE'VE RUN OUT OF **SPACE**, AND YOU HAVE TO **SEE** THIS TO **BELIEVE** IT! DON'T MISS **AVENGERS #142**--*

THE GODS GO WEST!

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
142
DEC
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS®
NO, MARVELITE--YOUR EYES AREN'T DECEIVING YOU! IT REALLY IS ... THE AVENGERS VS THE WILDEST WESTERN HEROES OF ALL!!
C'MON, PARDNERS-- SHOOT 'EM DOWN!
FACE IT, FRIEND--THIS STORY YOU DARE NOT MISS!

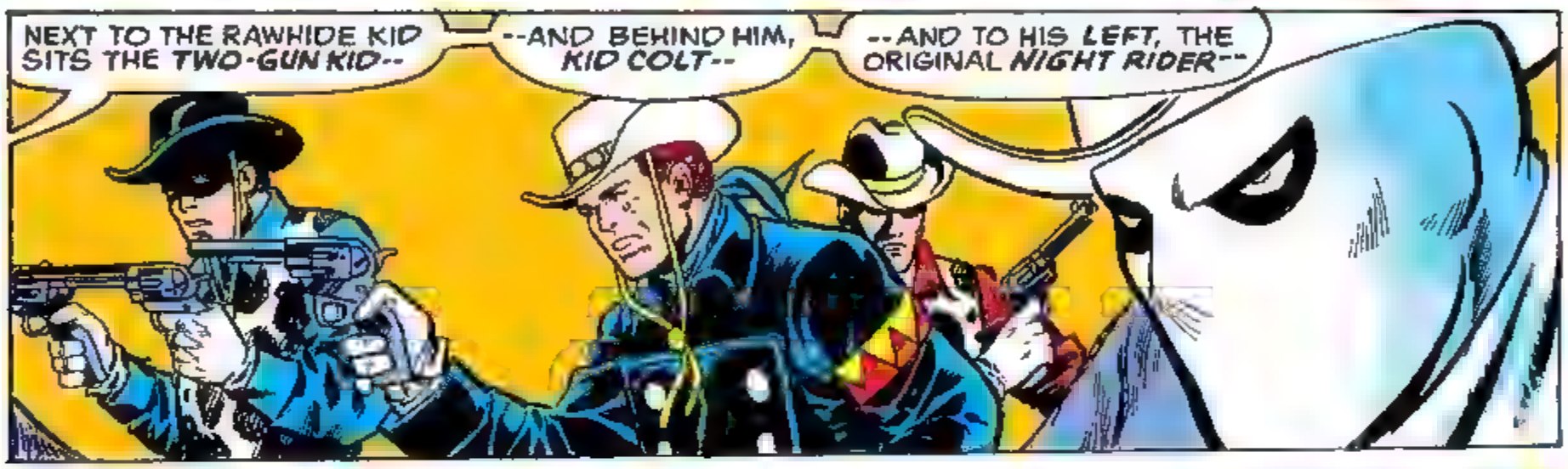
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

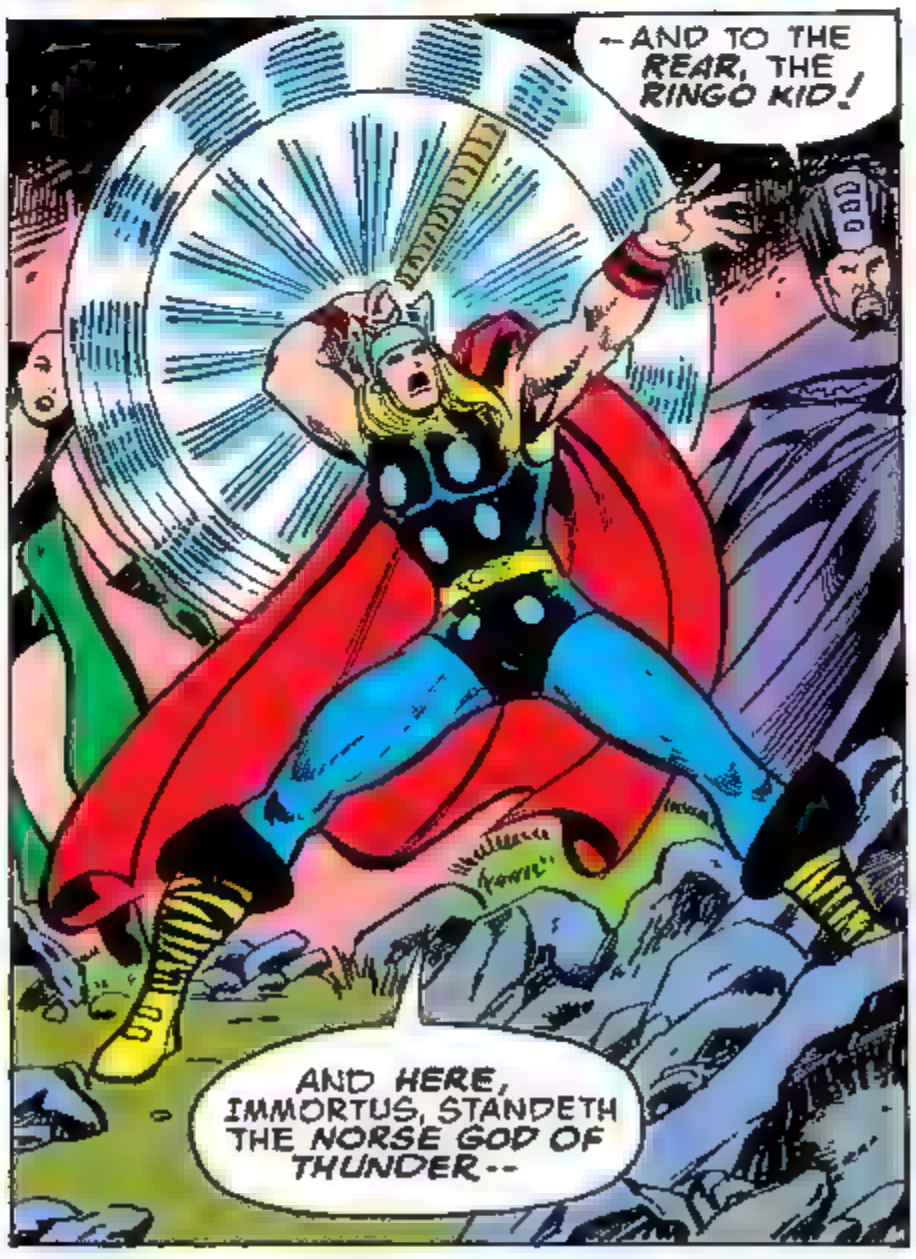
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!** TM

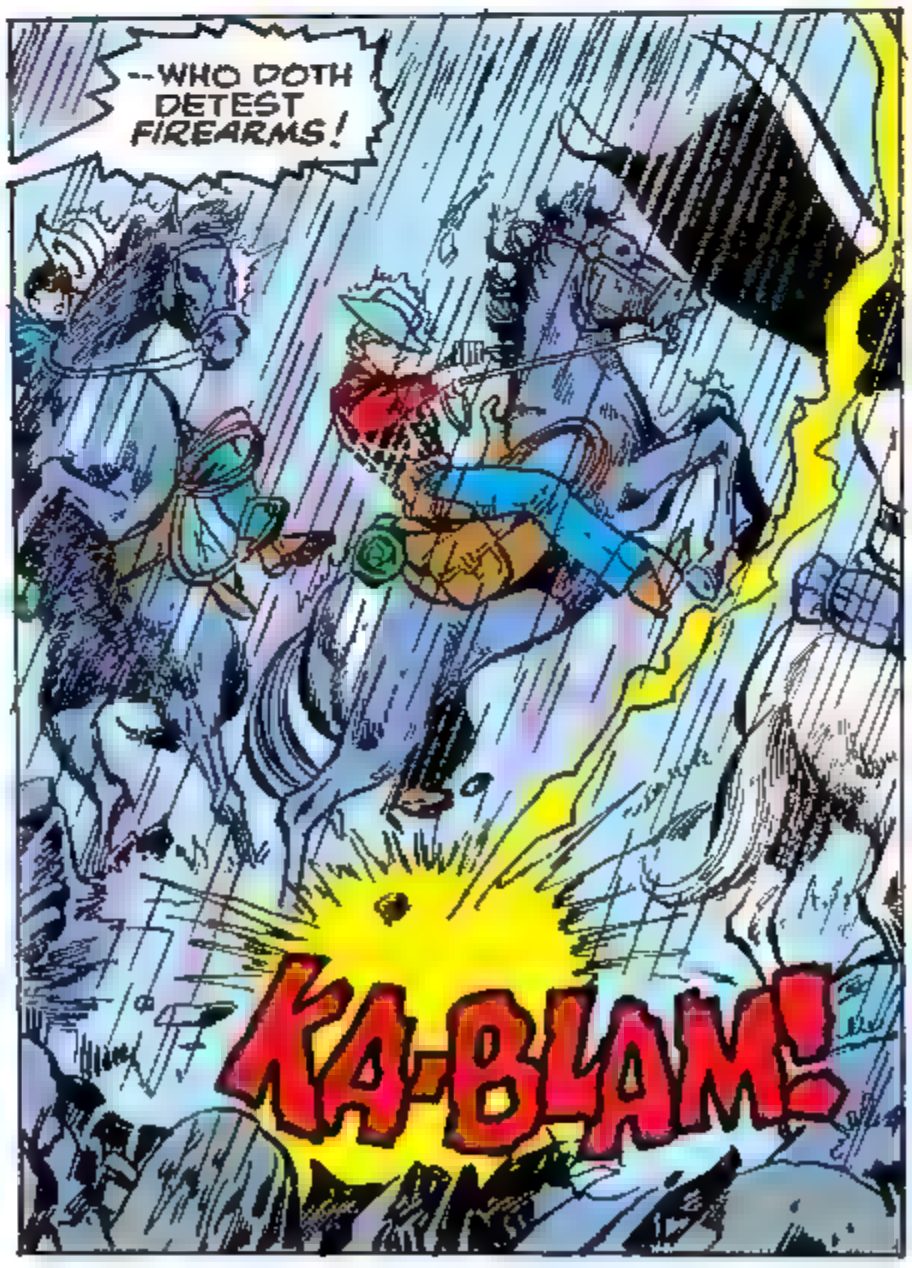
GO WEST, YOUNG GODS!

STEVE ENGLEHART *STORY*	GEORGE PEREZ, VINNIE COLLETTA *ART INKS*	TOM ORZECHOWSKI, JANICE COHEN, *Calligraphy Coloring*	MARV WOLFMAN *EDITOR*

WHAT MANNER OF MEN ARE THESE, THUNDER GOD? CAN THEY NOT SEE WHO WE ARE?
OF COURSE THEY CANNOT, PRIESTESS! WHAT IS A GOD-- TO A COWBOY?
YET YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR ADOPTED LAND IS FAULTY, THOR, IF YOU FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THESE MEN AS MORE THAN MERE "COWBOYS"!

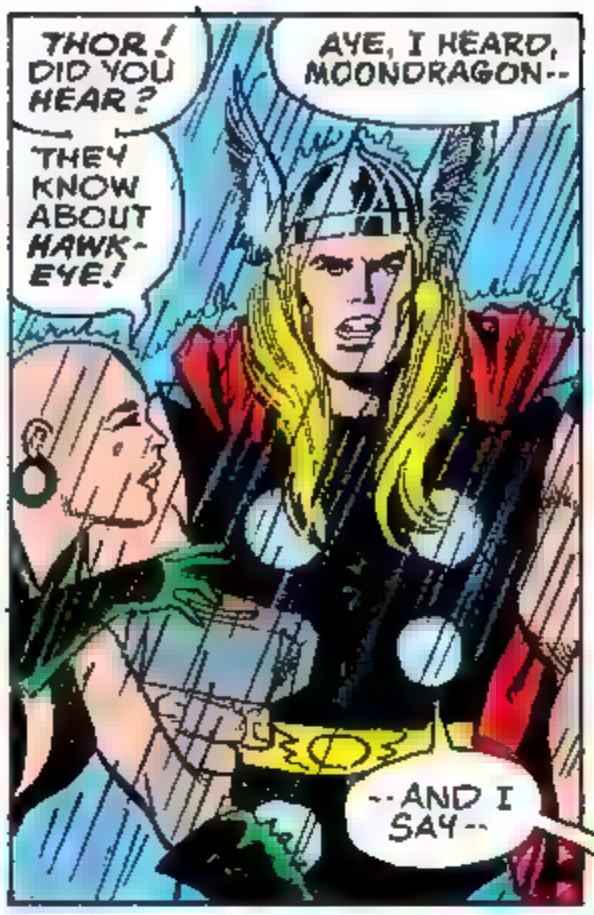

NEXT TO THE RAWHIDE KID SITS THE TWO-GUN KID--
--AND BEHIND HIM, KID COLT--
--AND TO HIS LEFT, THE ORIGINAL NIGHT RIDER--


--AND TO THE REAR, THE RINGO KID!
AND HERE, IMMORTUS, STANDETH THE NORSE GOD OF THUNDER--


--WHO DOTH DETEST FIREARMS!
KA-BLAM!

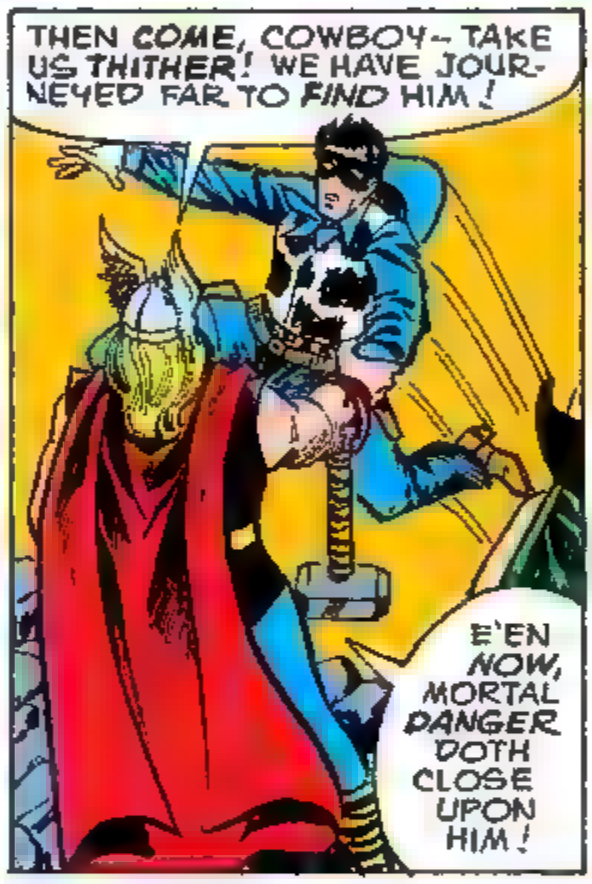
RAWHIDE! THESE RANNIES AIN'T NO ORDINARY OWLHOOTS!
THAT'S FOR DANG SURE, RINGO!

I FIGGERED THAT HAWKEYE FELLA WAS LOCO ENUFF--!

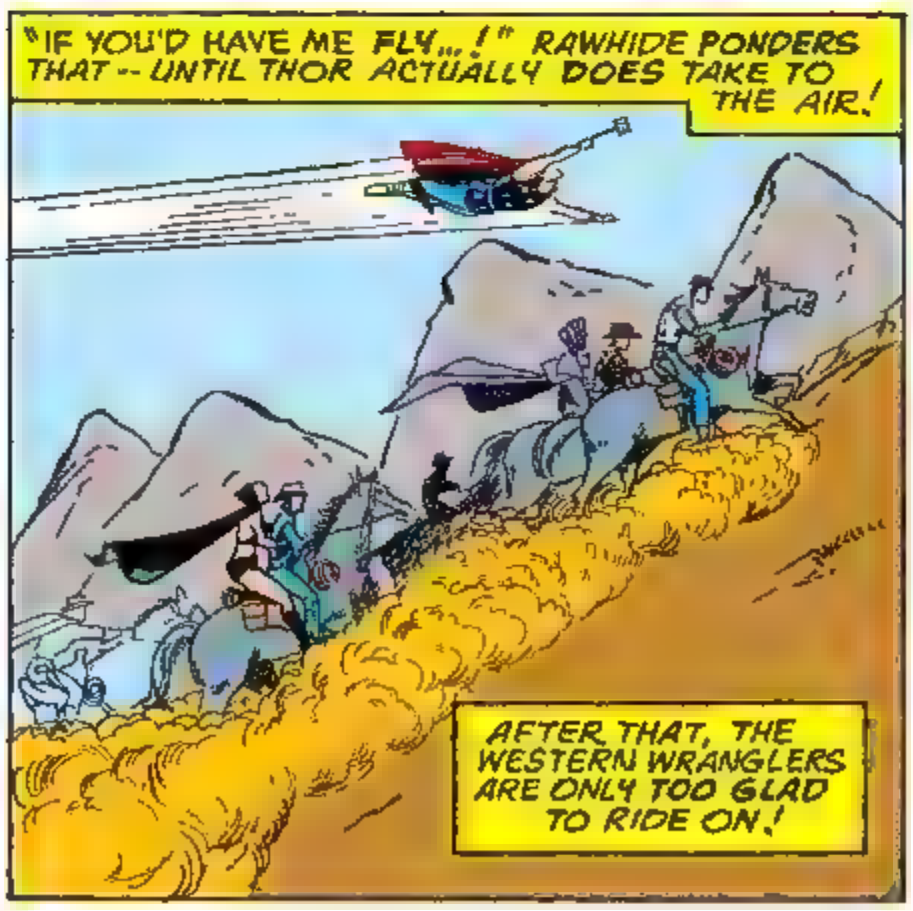

THOR! DID YOU HEAR?
AYE, I HEARD, MOONDRAGON--
THEY KNOW ABOUT HAWK-EYE!
--AND I SAY--

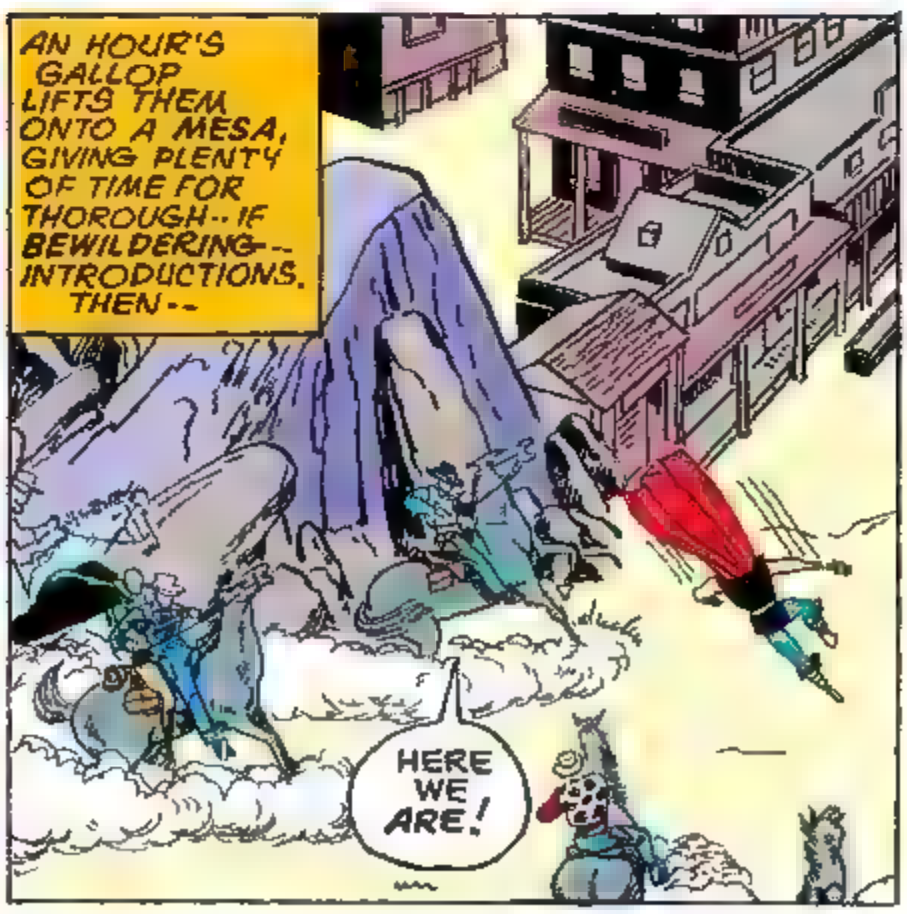
--ENOW!

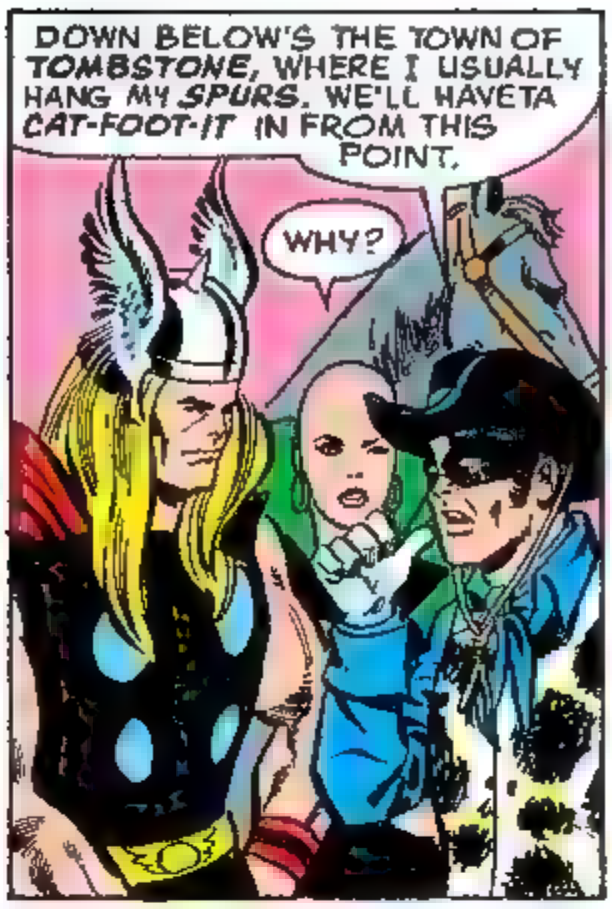
WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE YOU?
YOU DO KNOW WHERE HAWK-EYE IS?
THAT-- WILL TAKE SOME TIME.
YES...

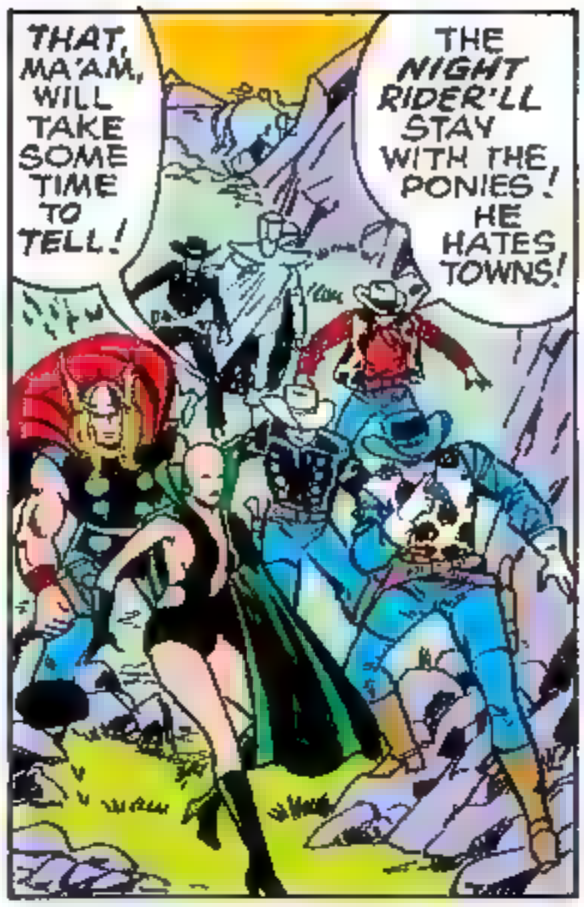

THEN COME, COWBOY-- TAKE US THITHER! WE HAVE JOURNEYED FAR TO FIND HIM!
E'EN NOW, MORTAL DANGER DOTH CLOSE UPON HIM!

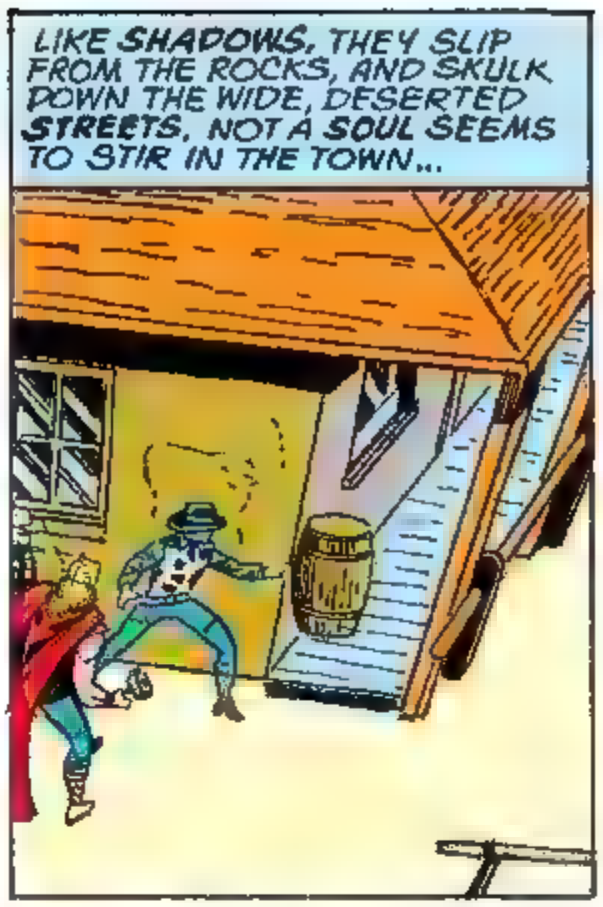
WELL? LET US BEGIN!
LISSEN, MA'AM. AH AIN'T RIDIN' NOWHERES WITH A BALD-HEADED FEMALE UP BEHIND!
IF YOU'D HAVE ME FLY, KID, I CANNOT! RIDE ON!

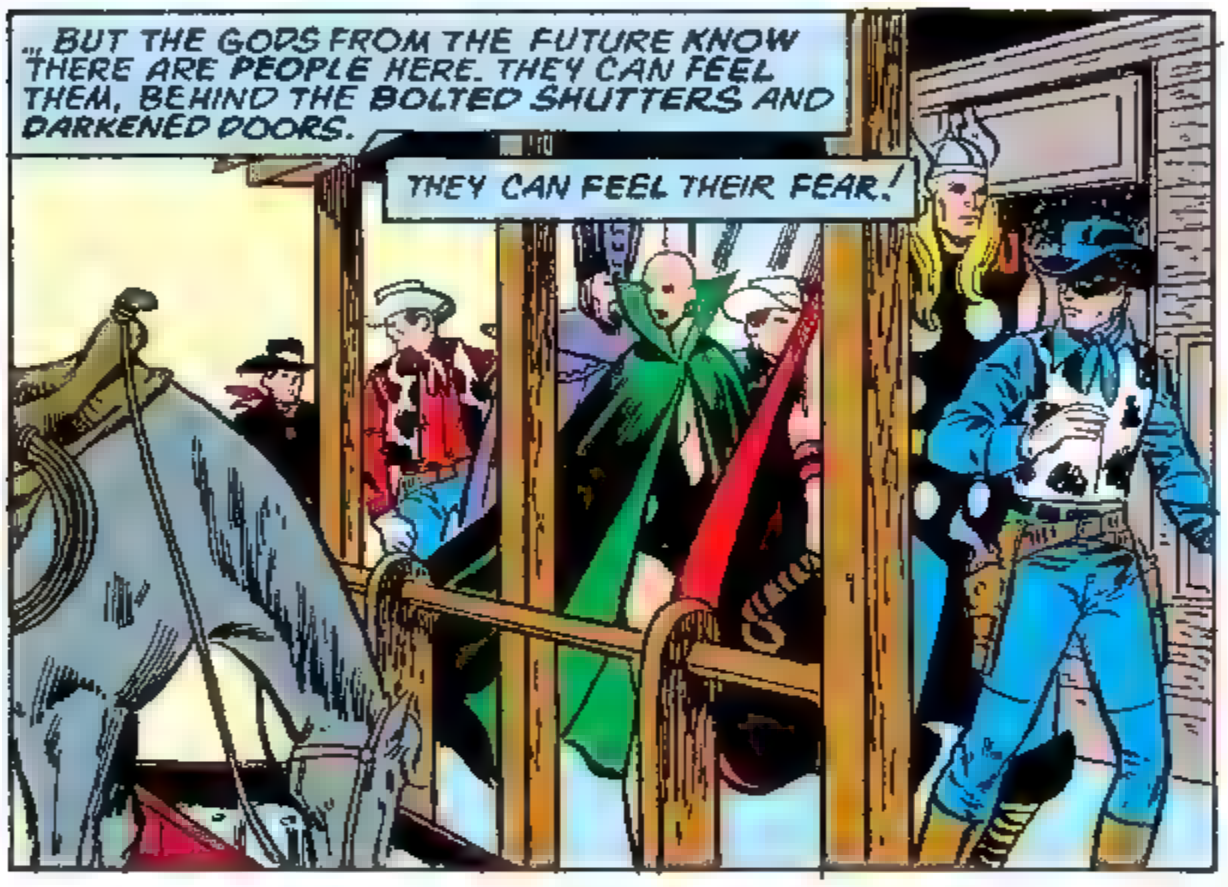

"IF YOU'D HAVE ME FLY...!" RAWHIDE PONDERS THAT -- UNTIL THOR ACTUALLY DOES TAKE TO THE AIR!
AFTER THAT, THE WESTERN WRANGLERS ARE ONLY TOO GLAD TO RIDE ON!


AN HOUR'S GALLOP LIFTS THEM ONTO A MESA, GIVING PLENTY OF TIME FOR THOROUGH-- IF BEWILDERING-- INTRODUCTIONS. THEN--
HERE WE ARE!


DOWN BELOW'S THE TOWN OF TOMBSTONE, WHERE I USUALLY HANG MY SPURS. WE'LL HAVE TA CAT-FOOT-IT IN FROM THIS POINT.
WHY?


THAT, MA'AM, WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO TELL!
THE NIGHT RIDER'LL STAY WITH THE PONIES! HE HATES TOWNS!

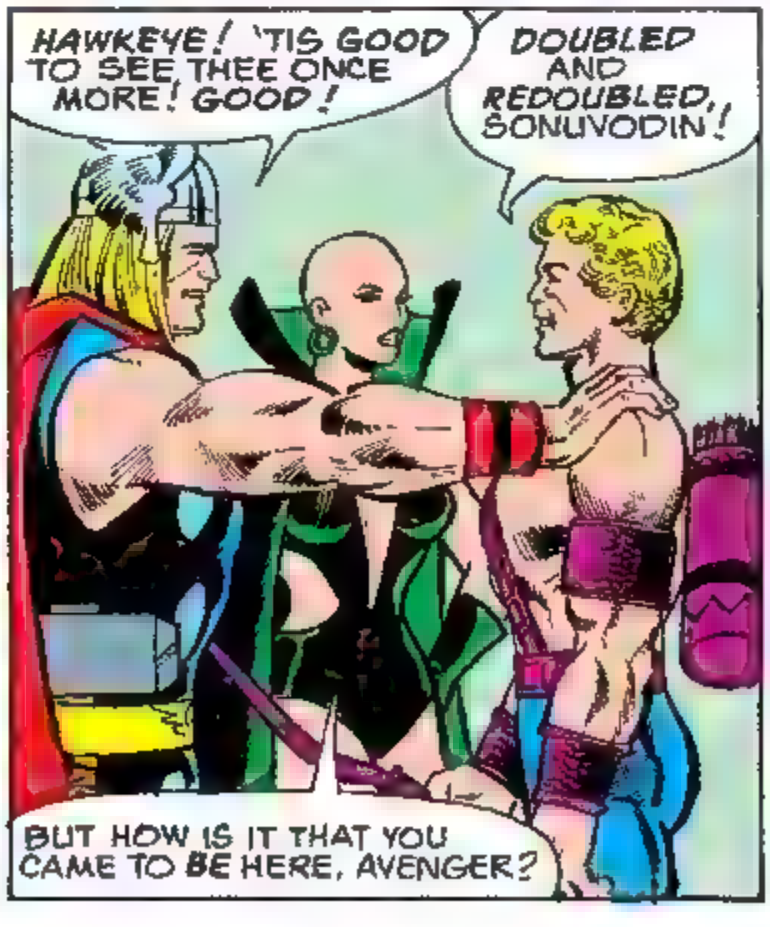

LIKE SHADOWS, THEY SLIP FROM THE ROCKS, AND SKULK DOWN THE WIDE, DESERTED STREETS. NOT A SOUL SEEMS TO STIR IN THE TOWN...


...BUT THE GODS FROM THE FUTURE KNOW THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE. THEY CAN FEEL THEM, BEHIND THE BOLTED SHUTTERS AND DARKENED DOORS.
THEY CAN FEEL THEIR FEAR!

MATTHE J. HAWK NEY
SO FAR, SO GOOD. THIS IS A FRIEND O' MINE'S OFFICE. *
HURRY UP IN!
*ACTUALLY, IT'S HIS SECRET ID.--M.

AGREED, TWO-GUN-- BUT THEN--
ODIN'S BLOOD!

WH--? ONLY ONE PERSON IN THE WORLD TALKS LIKE THAT!
IT CAN'T BE-- BUT IT IS!
IT IS!


HAWKEYE! 'TIS GOOD TO SEE THEE ONCE MORE! GOOD!
DOUBLED AND REDOUBLED, SONUVODIN!
BUT HOW IS IT THAT YOU CAME TO BE HERE, AVENGER?

WELL -- IT'S NOT THE KIND OF STORY I'D WANT TO BE *REMEMBERED* BY -- BUT HERE GOES. IF YOU REMEMBER, I WAS *HONKED* WHEN I STALKED OUT OF AVENGERS' MANSION --

"-- AND I DIDN'T *COOL DOWN* ANY WHILE I FLEW TO *DOC DOOM'S CASTLE!* SETTIN' THE TIME MACHINE'S DIALS FOR THE *12th CENTURY...*

"... I TRIPPED THE *SWITCH* IN MY INIMITABLE *STYLE...*

"... AND *VANISHED...*

"...NEVER *ONCE* BOTHERIN' TO THINK ABOUT...

KANG!

"WE'D DONE SO MUCH *TIME TRAVELIN'*; I WAS ACTUALLY FIGURIN' TO BE *BORED* -- BUT WOULDN'T YOU KNOW THAT GOOFBALL WAS *WAITIN'* FOR ME!

"THE WAY HE *COMES* AND *GOES*, HE PROBABLY KNEW I'D BE MAKIN' THE TRIP BEFORE *I* DID! ANYWAY, WE EACH DID OUR *NUMBERS* --

"-- AND I *HAD* WORKED UP ARROWS FOR HIM DURING THE *MANTIS SCENE* --

"-- SO I *TAGGED* 'IM --

"-- THROWIN' US *BOTH* OUT OF *KILTER* SOMEHOW!

"WE WENT SPINNIN' OFF TOWARD A CRAZY, GLOWIN' *HOLE* --

"-- AN' THE NEXT THING I *KNEW*, I WAS STANDIN' IN THE *DESERT*, ALL BY MY *LONESOME!*

"LEMME *TELL* YA, IT WAS *SPOOKY* -- 'CAUSE I COULDA BEEN *ANY-WHERE* -- AT *ANY TIME* --

"-- SO I GOT *RIGHT ON* LOOKIN' FOR *CIVILIZATION!*

"I *FOUND* IT, ALL RIGHT --

"--BUT I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT!

"AN' WHILE I WUZ STILL AIRIN' OUT MY JAW--

LOOK! THERE'S ONE OF 'EM--

--ANOTHER ONE O' THOSE MEN FROM MARS!

WHO, ME? YOU GOT IT WRONG, OLD TIMER--!

"BUT HE DIDN'T THINK SO!

"I FIGURED LATER THEY MUST HAVE BEEN RENEGADES -- PEOPLE WHO ESCAPED THE TOWN WHEN THE REAL "MAN FROM MARS" SHOWED UP!

"ANYBODY WANNA GUESS WHO HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

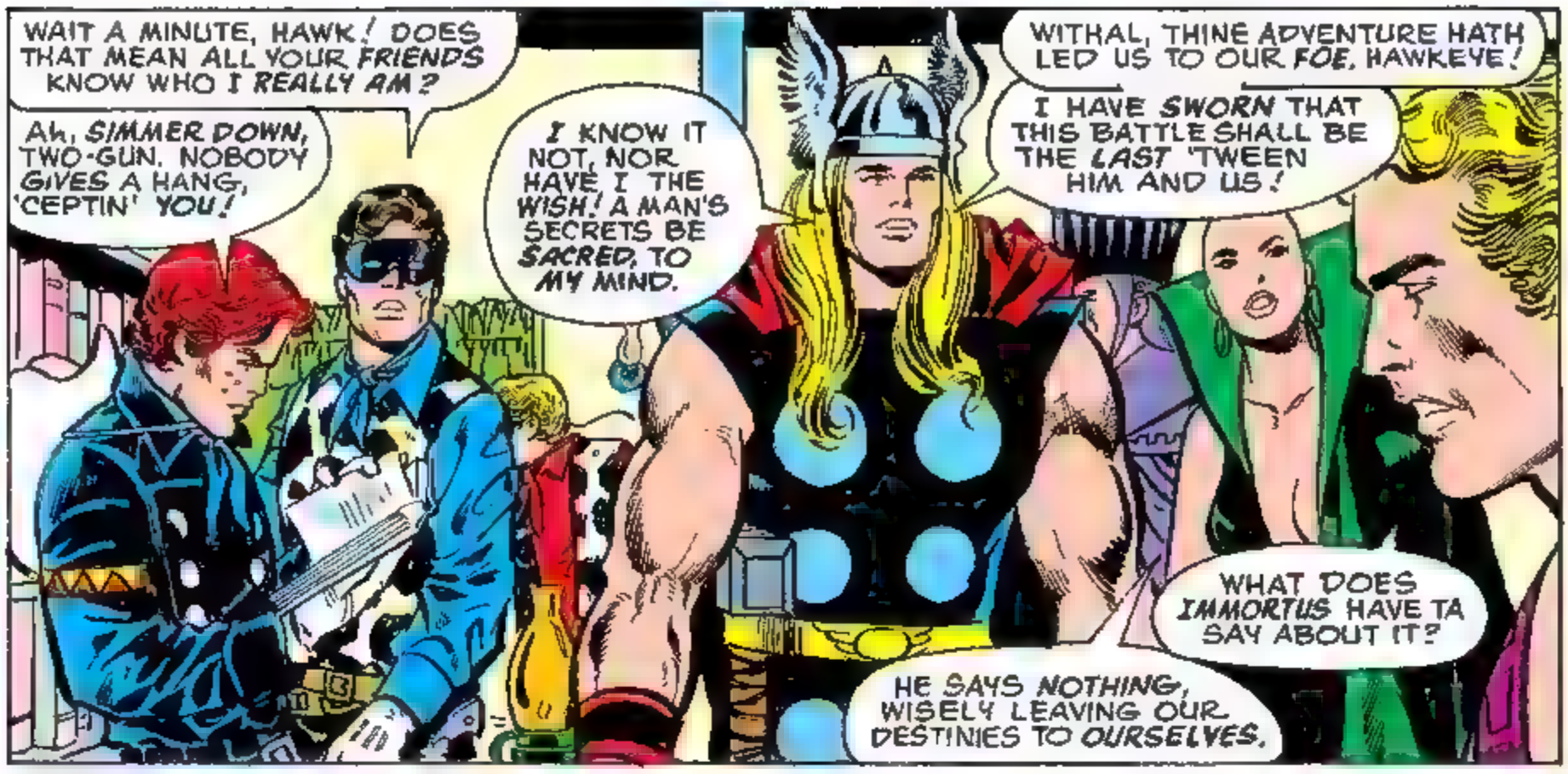
"I DIDN'T THINK SO.

"AT ANY RATE, I SLIPPED THE PRIVATE POSSE, AN' DITCHED MY MASK AND TUNIC --

"--SO I COULD CRUISE INTO TOWN WITHOUT DRAWIN' TOO MUCH ATTENTION SEE THE TOWN'S NAME WAS ON HALF THE BUILDINGS--

"-- AN' MY AMERICAN HISTORY HAD TAUGHT ME WHO I'D FIND THERE!"

HEW J. HAWK ATTORNEY

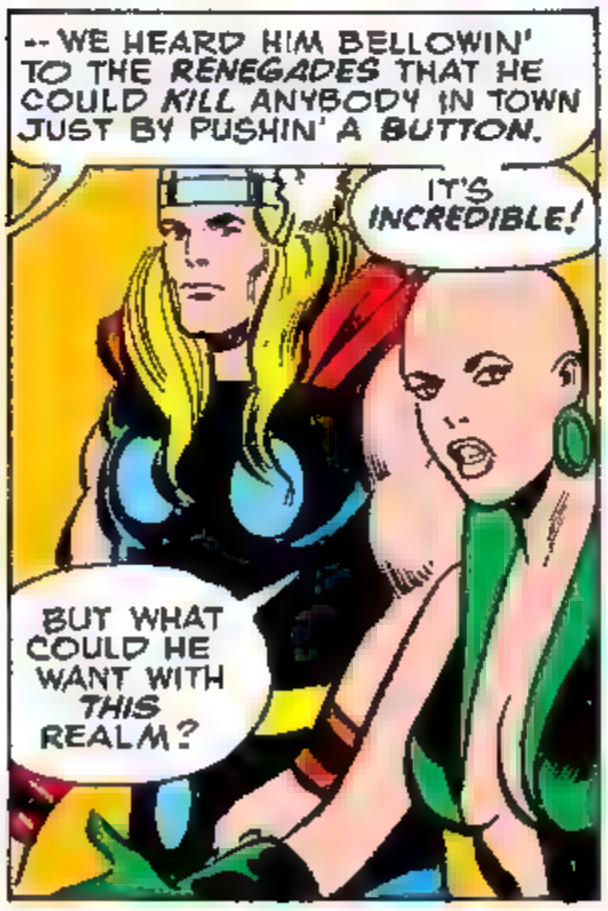

WAIT A MINUTE, HAWK! DOES THAT MEAN ALL YOUR FRIENDS KNOW WHO I REALLY AM?
Ah, SIMMER DOWN, TWO-GUN. NOBODY GIVES A HANG, 'CEPTIN' YOU!
I KNOW IT NOT, NOR HAVE I THE WISH! A MAN'S SECRETS BE SACRED, TO MY MIND.
WITHAL, THINE ADVENTURE HATH LED US TO OUR FOE, HAWKEYE!
I HAVE SWORN THAT THIS BATTLE SHALL BE THE LAST 'TWEEN HIM AND US!
WHAT DOES IMMORTUS HAVE TA SAY ABOUT IT?
HE SAYS NOTHING, WISELY LEAVING OUR DESTINIES TO OURSELVES.

ME, I DON'T SAVVY HALF O' WHAT'CHUR PALAVERIN' ABOUT-- BUT IF YER HERE FOR KANG, WELCOME!

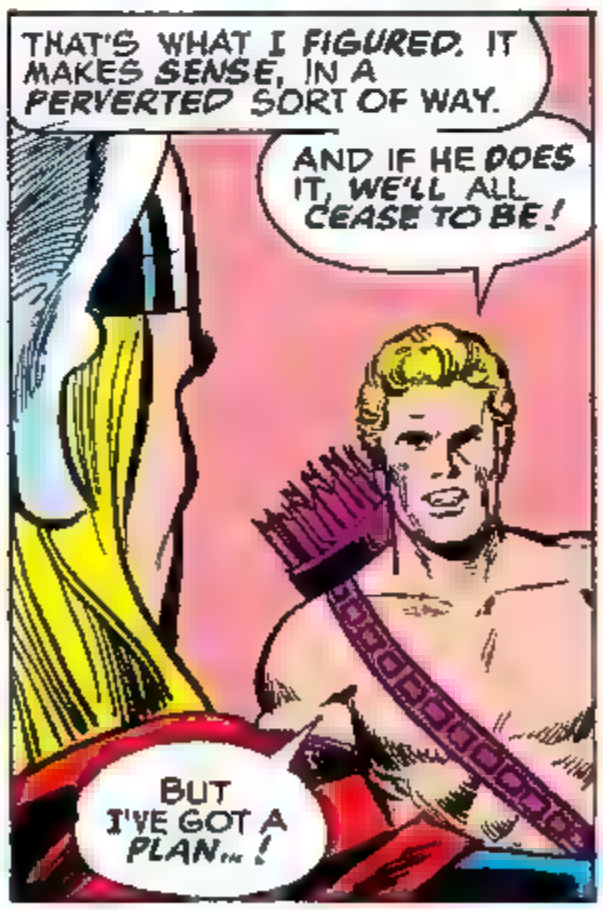
THAT'S WHUT TWO-GUN ROUNDED US UP FOR.
TROUBLE IS, WE AIN'T GOT TOO FAR

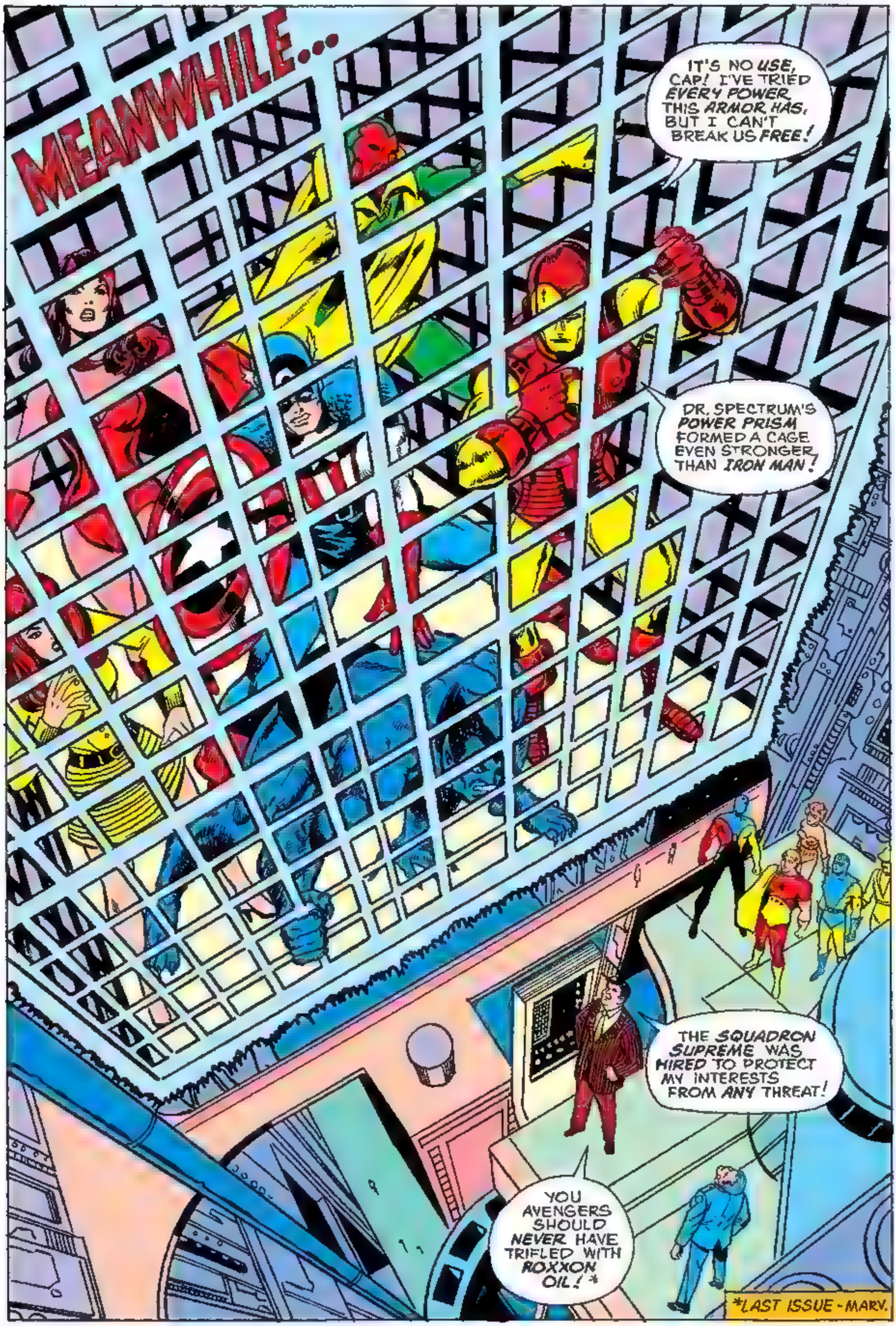
KANG'S TAKEN OVER MOST EVERYONE IN TOMBSTONE-- MADE 'EM HIS SLAVES, SOMEHOW.

IF ANYBODY EVEN HEARD OUR PONIES WHINNEY, KANG WOULD SOON KNOW ABOUT IT!
BUT WORSE'N THAT--


-- WE HEARD HIM BELLOWIN' TO THE RENEGADES THAT HE COULD KILL ANYBODY IN TOWN JUST BY PUSHIN' A BUTTON.
IT'S INCREDIBLE!
BUT WHAT COULD HE WANT WITH THIS REALM?

I SHALL SPEAK BUT ONCE, AND THIS KNOWLEDGE WILL CHANGE NOTHING.
IT IS HIS NEWEST MASTER PLAN:
TO CONQUER THE 20th CENTURY, HE WILL FIRST CONQUER THE 19th!


THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED. IT MAKES SENSE, IN A PERVERTED SORT OF WAY.
AND IF HE DOES IT, WE'LL ALL CEASE TO BE!
BUT I'VE GOT A PLAN...!


MEANWHILE...
IT'S NO USE, CAP! I'VE TRIED EVERY POWER THIS ARMOR HAS, BUT I CAN'T BREAK US FREE!
DR. SPECTRUM'S POWER PRISM FORMED A CAGE EVEN STRONGER THAN IRON MAN!
THE SQUADRON SUPREME WAS HIRED TO PROTECT MY INTERESTS FROM ANY THREAT!
YOU AVENGERS SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRIFLED WITH ROXXON OIL! *
*LAST ISSUE - MARV.

THE GEM'S MANIFESTATIONS ARE MORE THAN MERELY THE PHYSICAL.
EVEN MY ETHEREAL FORM CANNOT PASS THROUGH THE BARS!

I HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY, PATSY WALKER -- GETTING CAUGHT UP IN THIS! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET YOU HOLD ME TO OUR OLD AGREEMENT!
DON'T BE SILLY, BEAST! I LOVE IT!

YEAH? AND HOW ABOUT ME, SWEETHEART?

YOU'RE A RAT, BUZZ BAXTER! YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE THE MAN I MARRIED --
--OR EVEN THE MAN I DIVORCED!
YOU'VE CHANGED!

BUT I'M OUT HERE, BABY -- AND YOU'RE IN THERE!

DO THAT ON YOUR OWN TIME, COLONEL. OUR GUESTS HAVE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO WORRY ABOUT --
--LIKE WHY THESE HEROES FROM ANOTHER WORLD ARE WORKING FOR ME -- AND WHAT THEY'LL DO NEXT!

SEEMS LIKE YOU SHOULD WONDER WHAT THE AVENGERS WILL DO NEXT, JONES!
NO TRAP YET HAS HELD US, FOREVER!

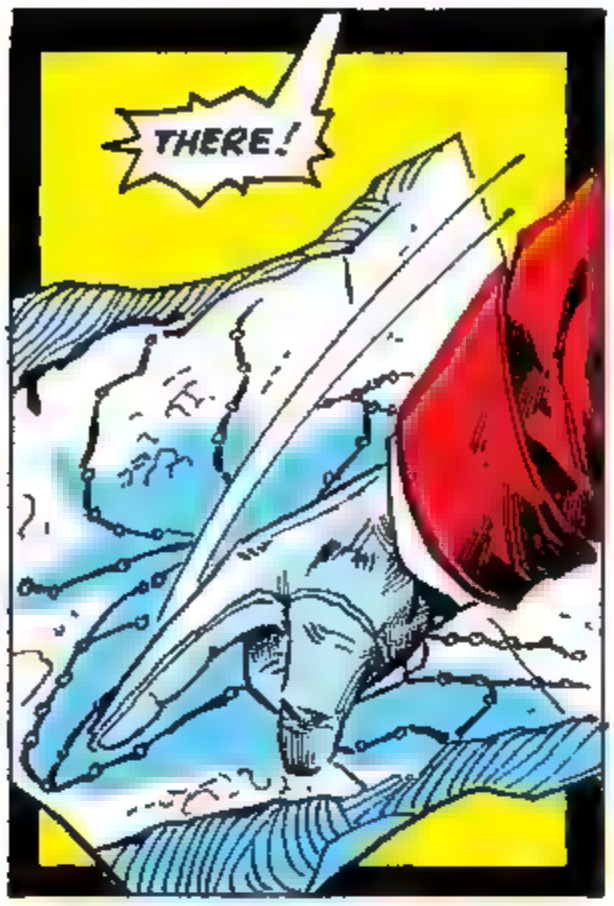
THIS ONE WILL!
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU LEARNED WHICH OF US IS REALLY THE BETTER TEAM!

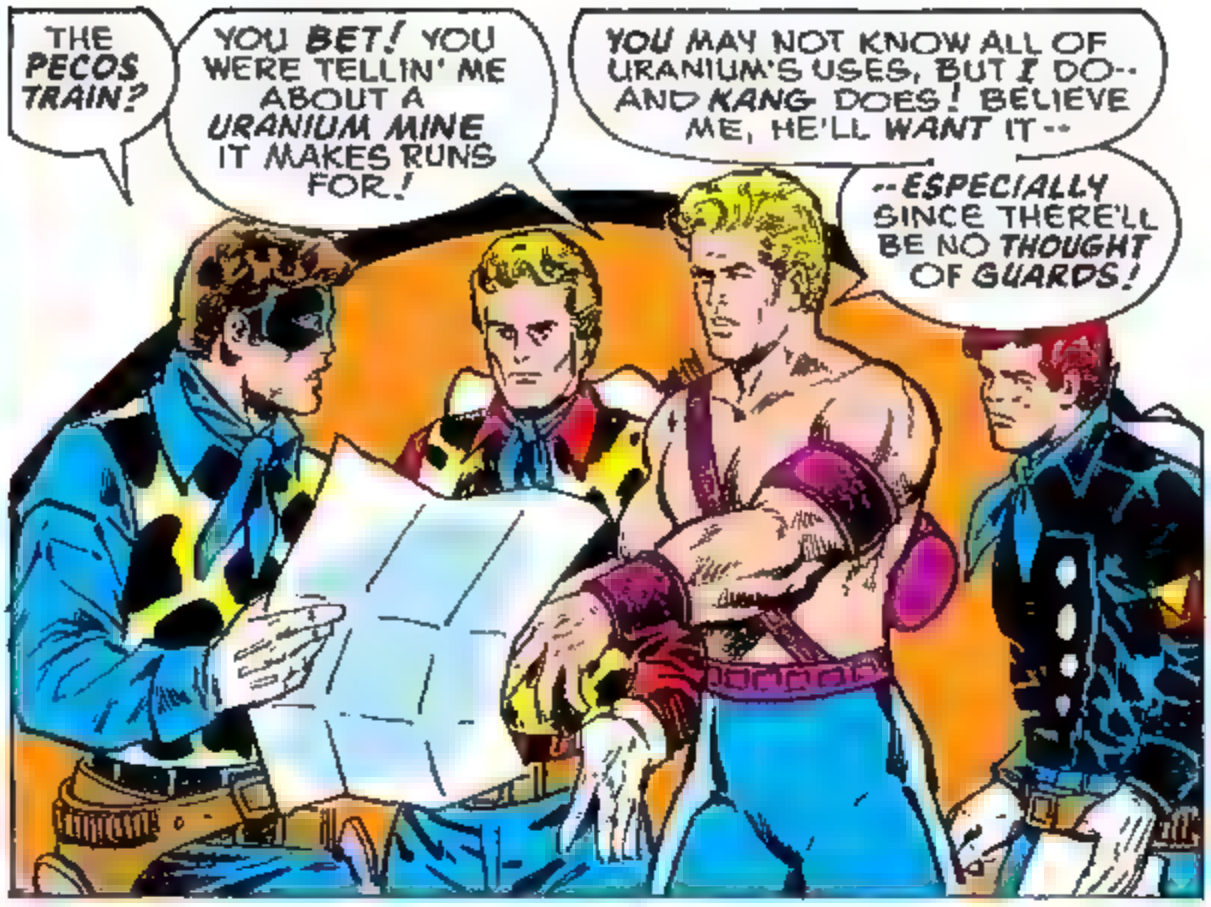
LISTEN, YOU BIG PALOOKA, THEY'LL GET OUT OF HERE!
THEY WILL!

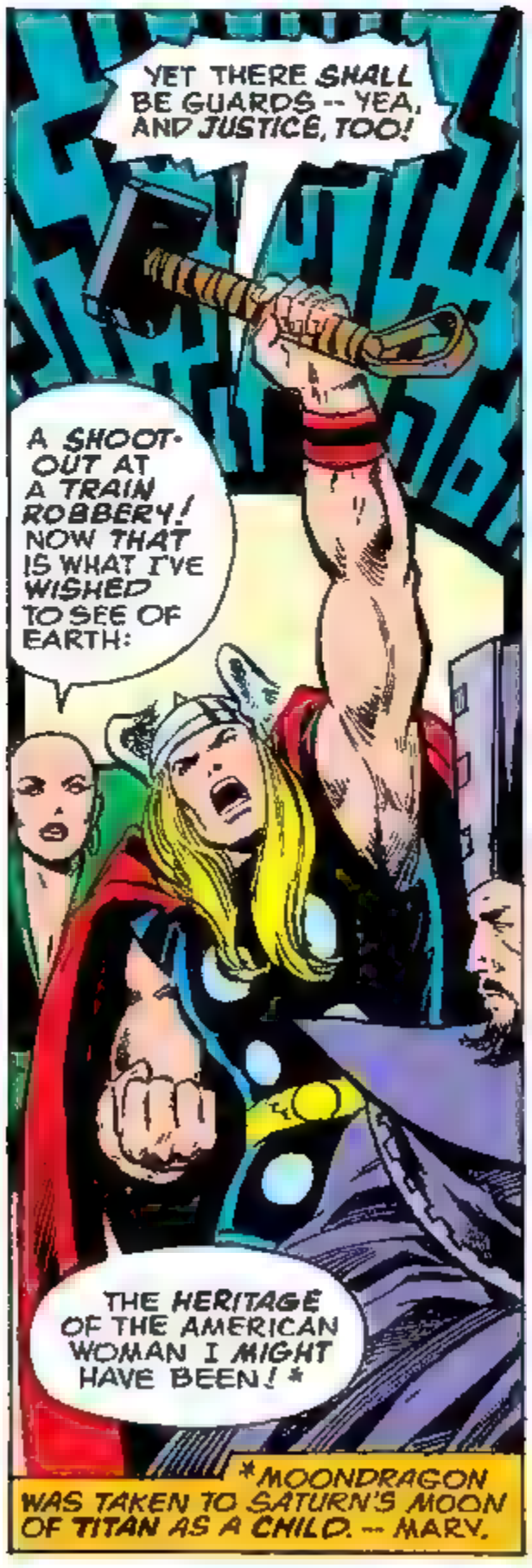
SURE, PATSY... SURE THING!
LET'S GO, SQUADRON.
WE'RE FINISHED HERE!

I GUESS YOU CAN'T SCARE FOLKS WITH WORDS THESE DAYS, HUH?

SORRY. IT TAKES ACTIONS, JUST AS IT ALWAYS HAS.
BUT I HAVE A PLAN --!


THERE!

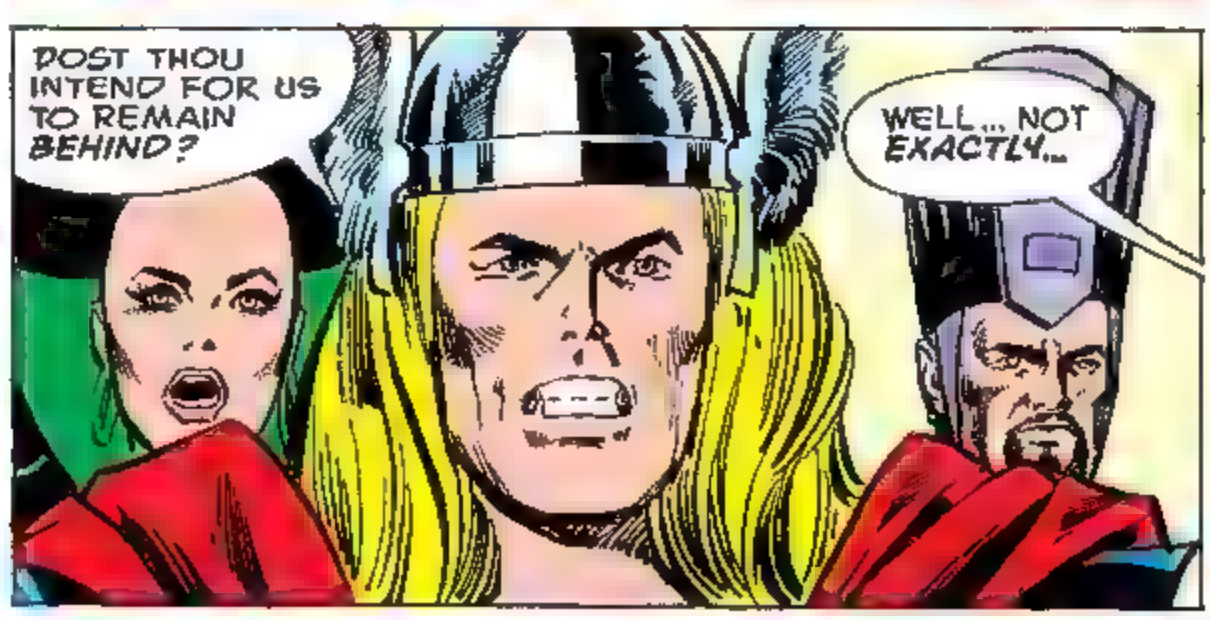

THE PECOS TRAIN?
YOU BET! YOU WERE TELLIN' ME ABOUT A URANIUM MINE IT MAKES RUNS FOR!
YOU MAY NOT KNOW ALL OF URANIUM'S USES, BUT I DO-- AND KANG DOES! BELIEVE ME, HE'LL WANT IT--
--ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE'LL BE NO THOUGHT OF GUARDS!


YET THERE SHALL BE GUARDS -- YEA, AND JUSTICE, TOO!
A SHOOT-OUT AT A TRAIN ROBBERY! NOW THAT IS WHAT I'VE WISHED TO SEE OF EARTH:
THE HERITAGE OF THE AMERICAN WOMAN I MIGHT HAVE BEEN! *
*MOONDRAGON WAS TAKEN TO SATURN'S MOON OF TITAN AS A CHILD. -- MARV.

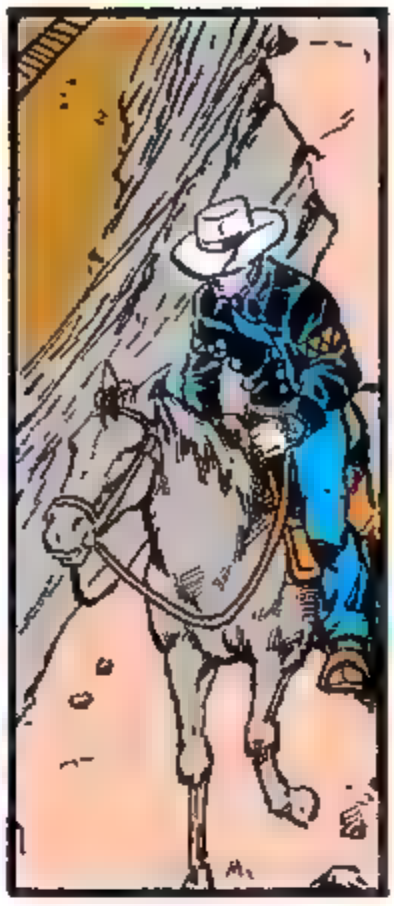
UH, SAY, HAWK -- WHO ARE THESE RANNIES, REALLY?
THEY'RE MY FRIENDS, KID -- EVEN IF THEY ARE ONE-OF-A-KIND FOR ANY AGE!

BUT LISTEN, THUNDER GOD, THERE IS ONE THING--!
Aye?

WELL, ME AN' THE KIDS ARE COOL--
--BUT ONE SIGHT OF YOU WOULD TIP KANG TO WHAT'S UP!

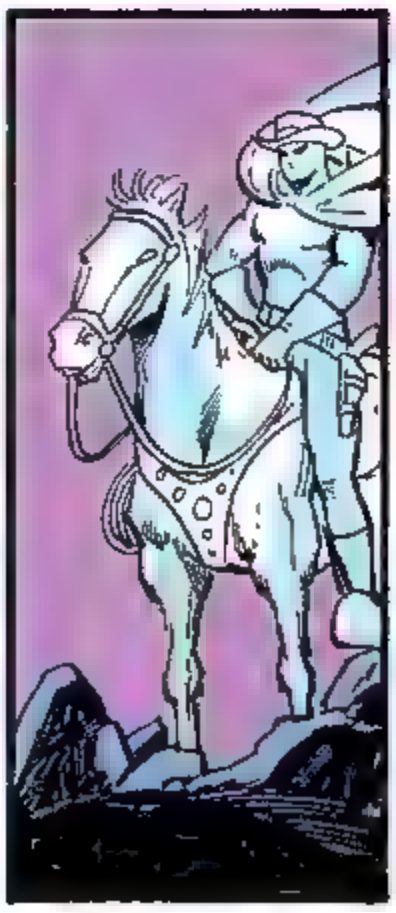

DOST THOU INTEND FOR US TO REMAIN BEHIND?
WELL... NOT EXACTLY...

NIGHTFALL. A WARM DRY BREEZE STIRS THE JOSHUA TREES, AND THE CRICKETS NEAR THE RIVER START TO SING. BUT SUDDENLY, THE ARIZONA QUIET IS CUT WITH A CLATTER--
--AND A ROAR!
THE PECOS TRAIN IS DEAD ON TIME -- AND SO ARE SIX MEN ON A BUTTE!



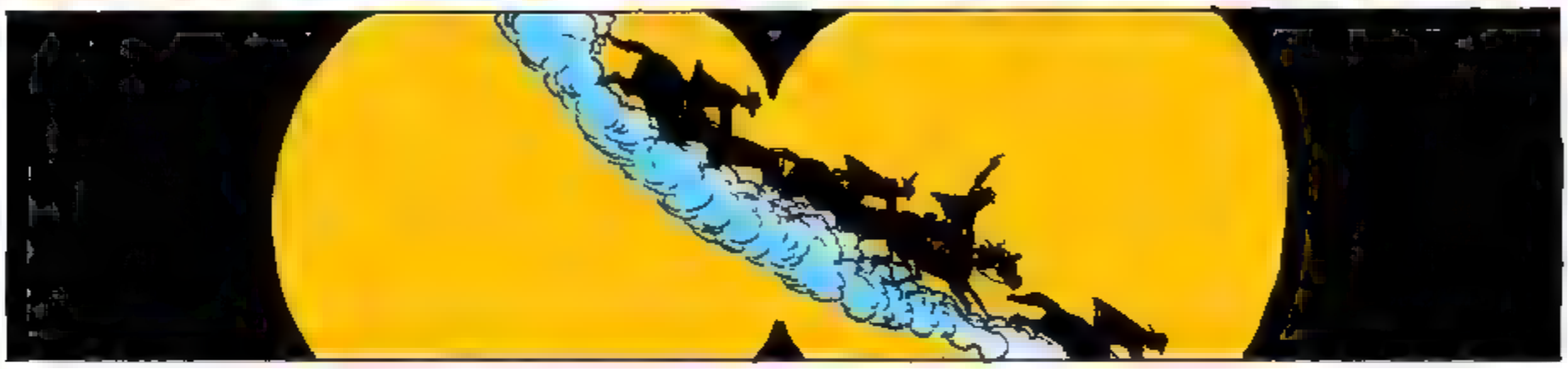
WHILE, INSIDE THE ROCKING BOXCARS, TWO MORE OR-LESS TYPICAL TRAVELERS SIT TENSELY...

... AND ON A BLUFF JUST AHEAD, SEVEN VERY TYPICAL BORDERTOWN BANDITS AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF THEIR PREY!



MIX
WELL!

LET'S TAKE 'ER, BOYS!
SHE'S AS RIPE FOR MILKIN' AS A SOW A WEEK STRAYED!



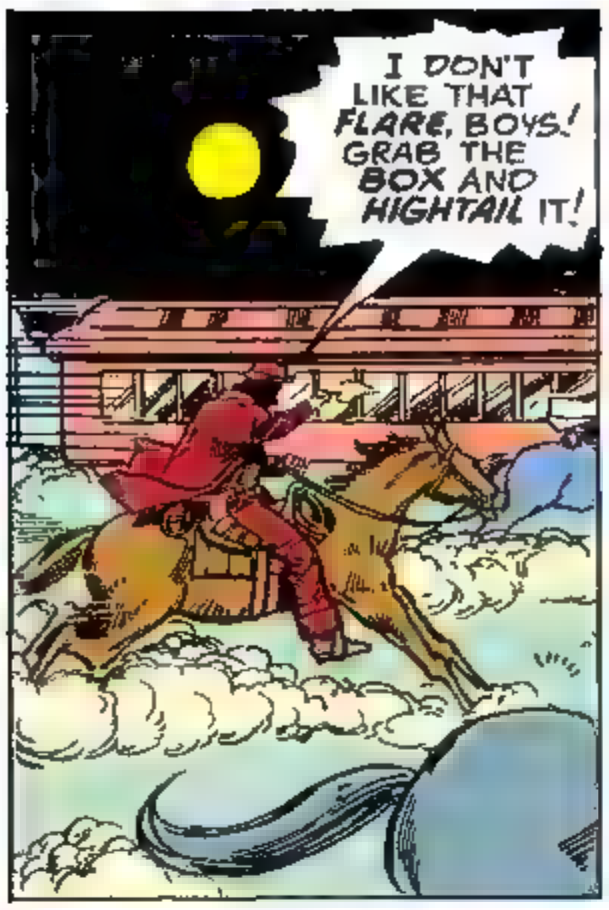
THERE GO THE SLICKERS WE'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR. DON'T SEE KANG WITH 'EM, THOUGH.
WELL, WE DON'T REALLY NEED 'IM! WE'LL GET WHAT WE WANT JUST THE SAME, OR MY NAME'S NOT --

-- THE HAWKEYE KID!

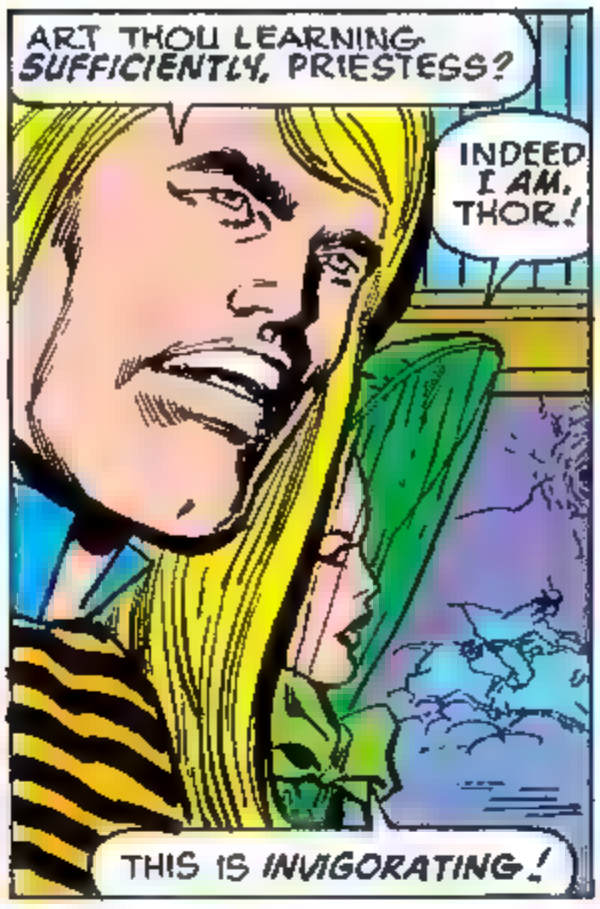
THE SIGNAL!

TIME TO RIDE INTO ACTION! BUT WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT --

-- THAT WHEN I CHOSE TO MAINTAIN A SECRET IDENTITY, SUCH PEOPLE AS "THE AVENGERS" WOULD FOLLOW!
GODS!
I'VE MET GODS!


I DON'T LIKE THAT FLARE, BOYS! GRAB THE BOX AND HIGHTAIL IT!

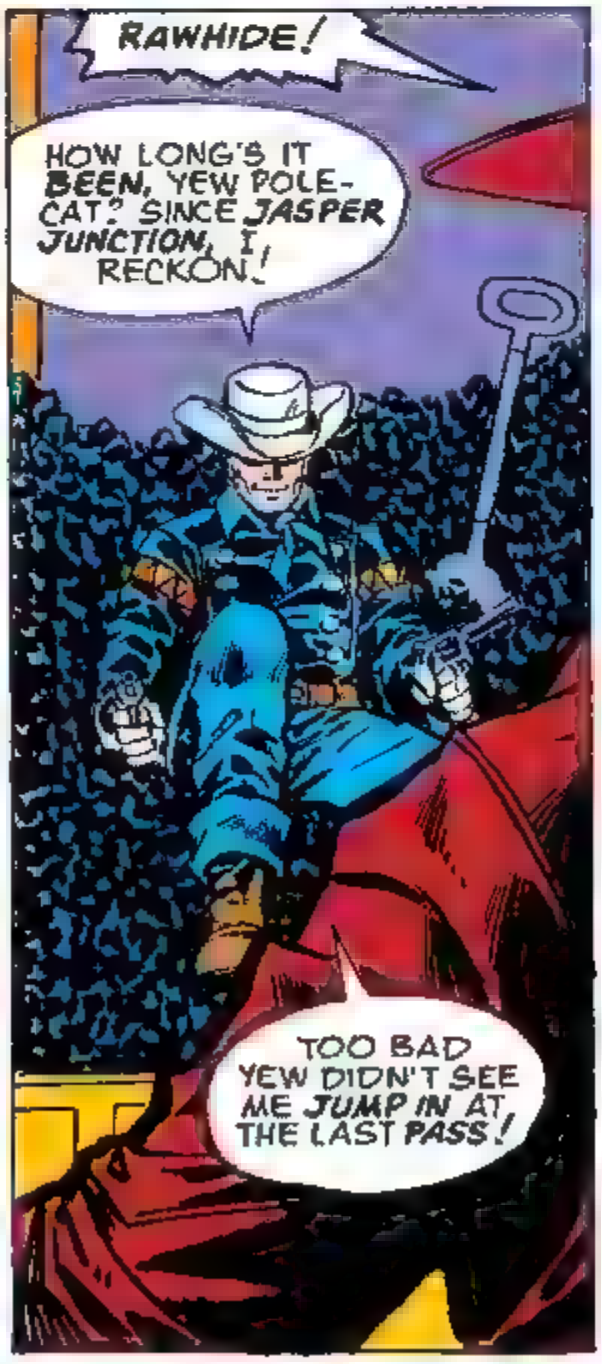
THE MAN CALLED ACE, DESPITE HIS CRISP COMMANDS, IS STILL NOT OVERLY WORRIED! HE KNOWS THE RISKS OF ROBBERY AND SUDDEN FRONTIER JUSTICE--
--BUT HE ALSO KNOWS HIS COLT .45
PTOW!

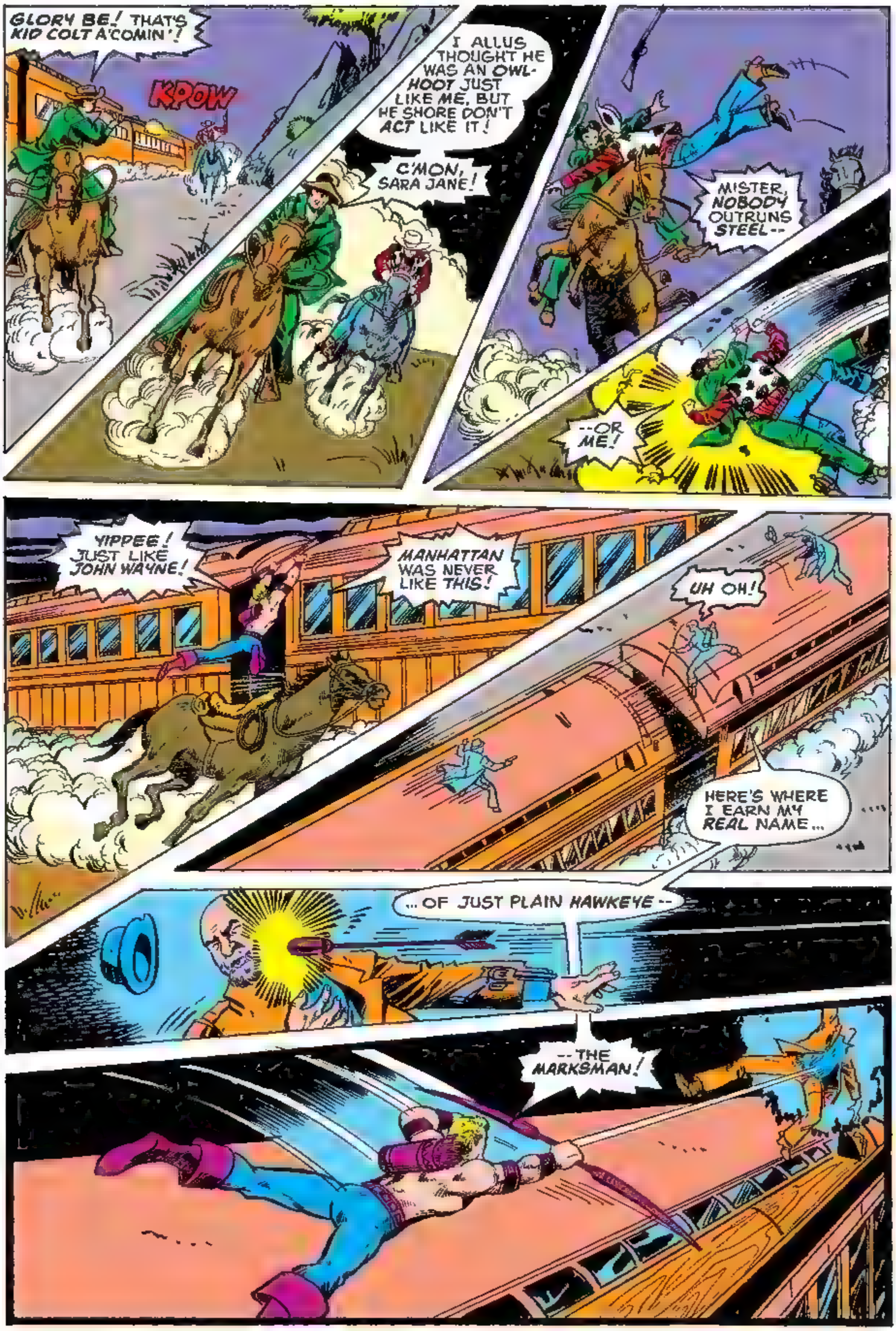

ART THOU LEARNING SUFFICIENTLY, PRIESTESS?
INDEED I AM, THOR!
THIS IS INVIGORATING!

THE LOCOMOTIVE TIPS, DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO TOO FAST A SPEED FOR THE CURVES--
--AND THE RAIDERS NEVER LOSE AN INCH!

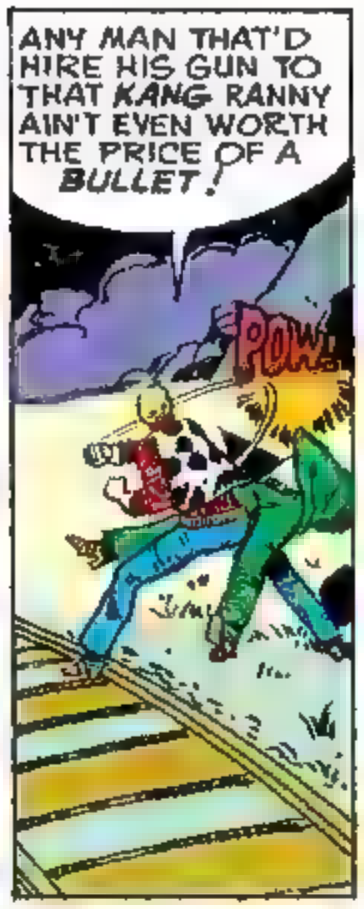
GETCHER HANDS OFF'N THAT THROTTLE, ENGINEER!

NOW YEW DON'T WANNA TALK TO THE MAN LIKE THAT, ACE!
WHAT WOULD WE DO WITH ALL THIS NICE COAL?
HUH?


RAWHIDE!
HOW LONG'S IT BEEN, YEW POLE-CAT? SINCE JASPER JUNCTION, I, RECKON!
TOO BAD YEW DIDN'T SEE ME JUMP IN AT THE LAST PASS!


GLORY BE! THAT'S KID COLT A'COMIN'!
KPOW
I ALLUS THOUGHT HE WAS AN OWL-HOOT JUST LIKE ME, BUT HE SHORE DON'T ACT LIKE IT!
C'MON, SARA JANE!
MISTER, NOBODY OUTRUNS STEEL--
--OR ME!
YIPPEE! JUST LIKE JOHN WAYNE!
MANHATTAN WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!
UH OH!
HERE'S WHERE I EARN MY REAL NAME...
... OF JUST PLAIN HAWKEYE--
--THE MARKSMAN!

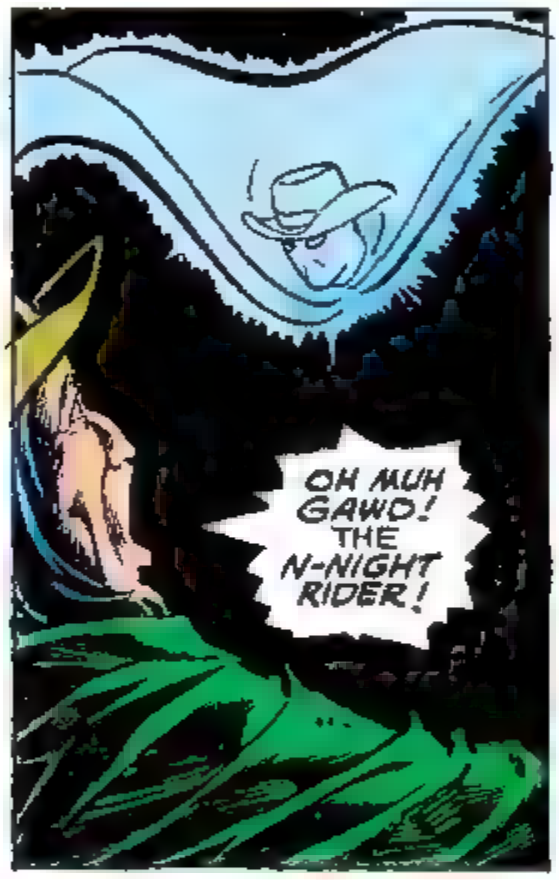
PARDNER, I SEEN WHAT YOUR BOSS DID TO THE FOLKS IN TOMBSTONE --
WOP!
-- AN' I DIDN'T LIKE IT ONE BIT!


ANY MAN THAT'D HIRE HIS GUN TO THAT KANG RANNY AIN'T EVEN WORTH THE PRICE OF A BULLET!
POW!

MY FISTS ARE ALL --
AW SHUCKS!
HE AIN'T LISTENIN'!

COLT! RAWHIDE! I THINK I SAW THE RINGO KID HISSELF!
BROTHER, WHATEVER'S GOT THEM HELLERS DOWN ON US, IT'S MORE'N I WANNA MESS WITH!
LUCKY FER ME NOBODY ELSE KNOWS THIS HERE CAVE!

WRONG, MORTAL: THE SON OF THE SPIRITS KNOWS ALL!


OH MUH GAWD! THE N-NIGHT RIDER!

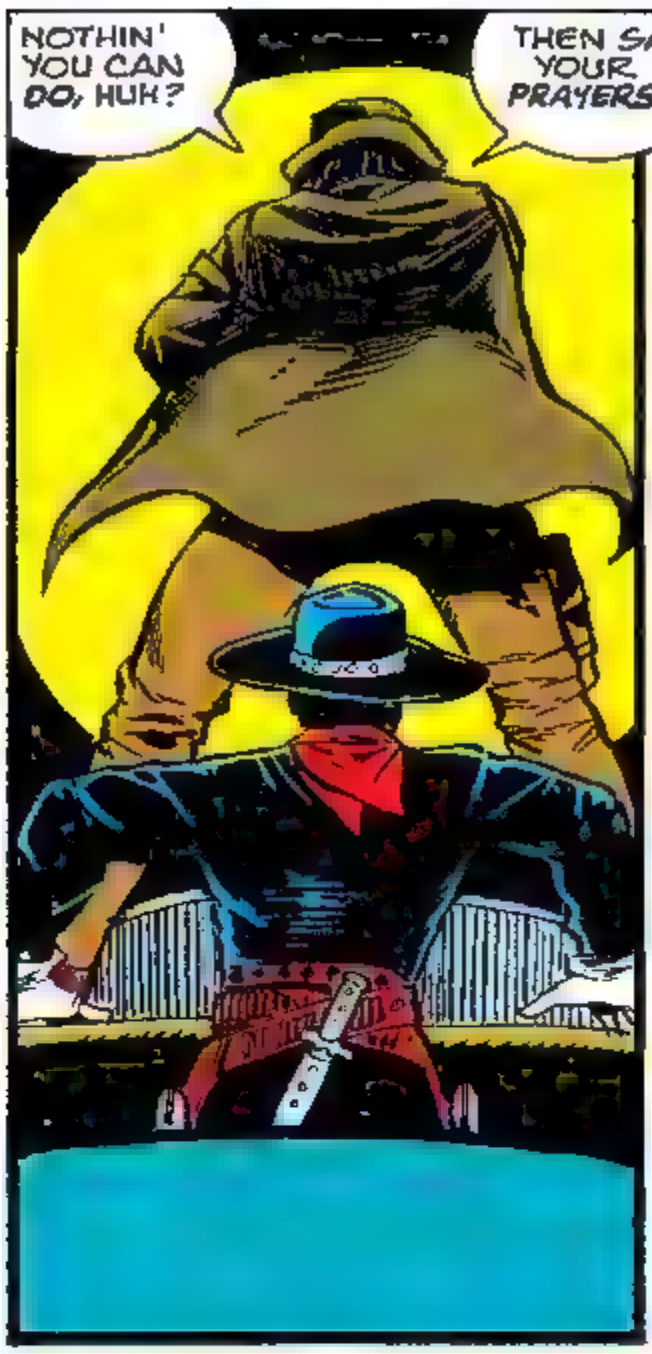
THIS IS TOO MUCH! THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' ANY WORSE--

WUMP!

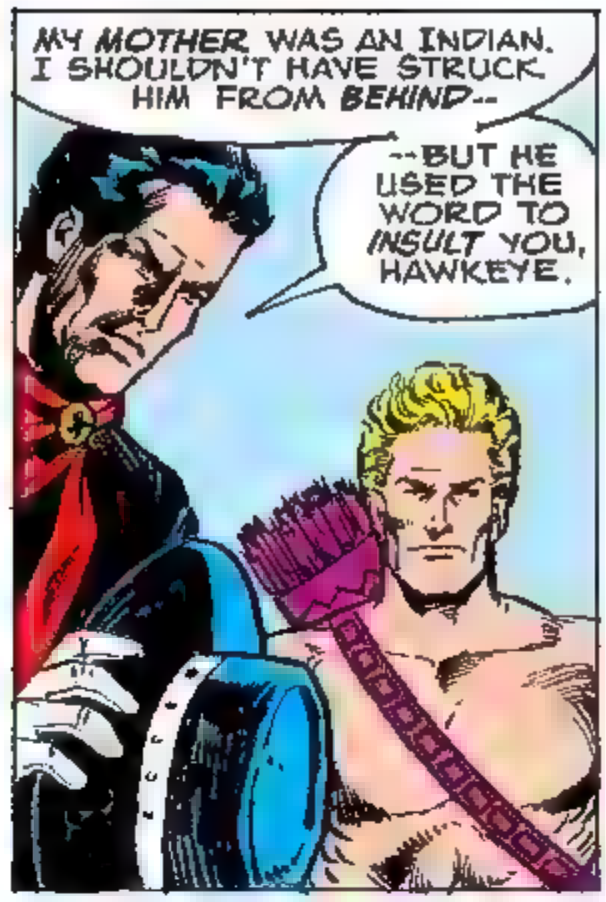
ALL RIGHT, INJUN-MAN -- YUH GOT MUH SIDE-KICKS--
-- BUT AH'M RIGHT BEHIND 'EM --

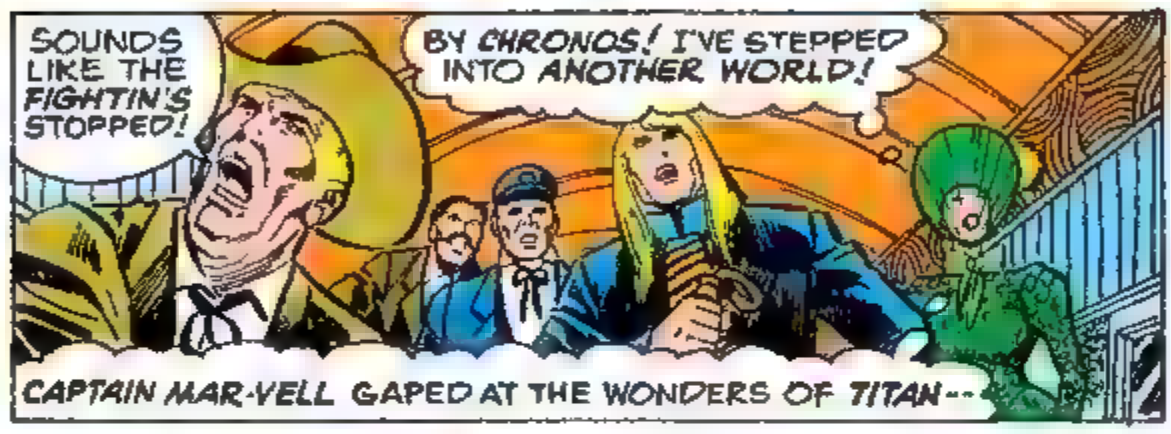
-- AN' SINCE I ALREADY GOT MY GUN POINTED AT YER LIVER--
-- YER GONNA PAY!

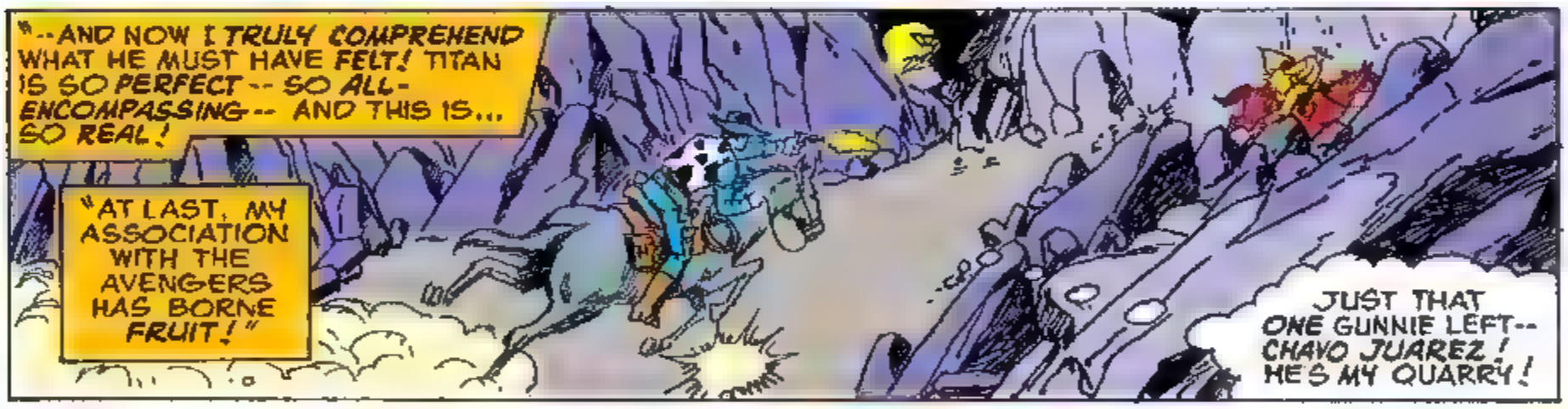
G'WAN! WHY DON'TCHA TRY SOMETHIN' FANCY...?


NOTHIN' YOU CAN DO, HUH?
THEN SAY YOUR PRAYERS!

K-LUB!


MY MOTHER WAS AN INDIAN. I SHOULDN'T HAVE STRUCK HIM FROM BEHIND--
--BUT HE USED THE WORD TO INSULT YOU, HAWKEYE.


SOUNDS LIKE THE FIGHTIN'S STOPPED!
BY CHRONOS! I'VE STEPPED INTO ANOTHER WORLD!
CAPTAIN MAR-VELL GAPED AT THE WONDERS OF TITAN--

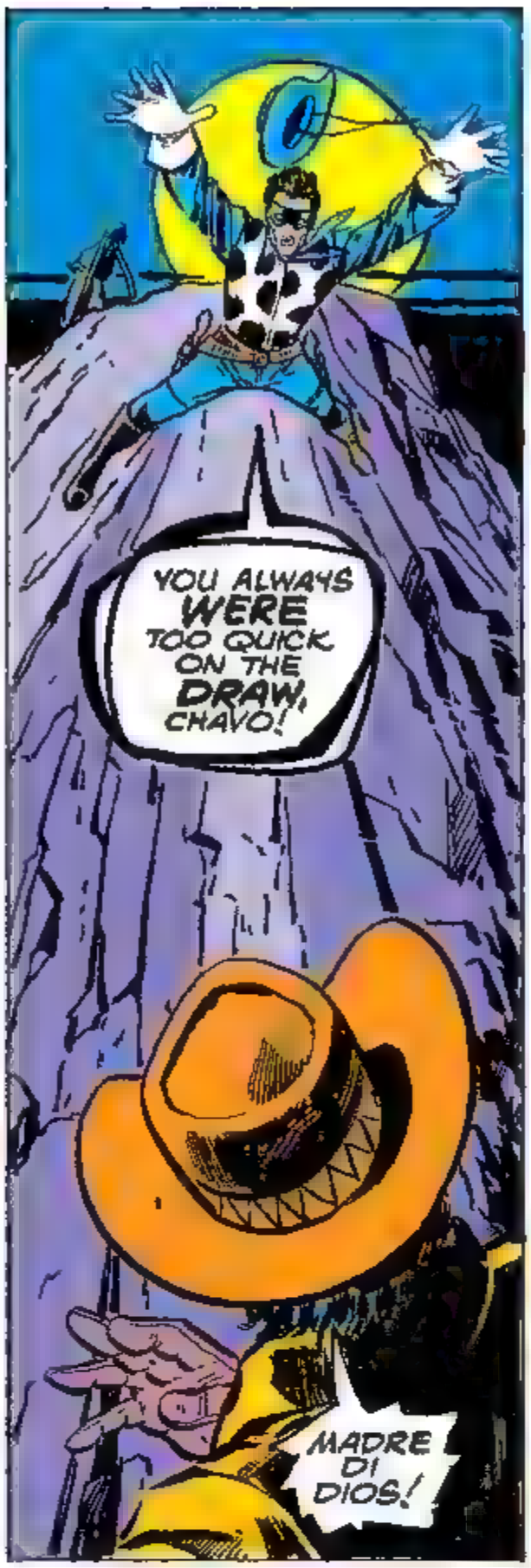

"--AND NOW I TRULY COMPREHEND WHAT HE MUST HAVE FELT! TITAN IS SO PERFECT -- SO ALL-ENCOMPASSING -- AND THIS IS... SO REAL!
"AT LAST, MY ASSOCIATION WITH THE AVENGERS HAS BORNE FRUIT!"
JUST THAT ONE GUNNIE LEFT-- CHAVO JUAREZ! HE'S MY QUARRY!

NO, THUNDER! WE'VE EXPLORED THIS CANYON BEFORE, BIG FELLA!

LET'S TAKE THIS TRAIL TO THE TOP O' THE PASS--

--AND DO A JOB FOR THE THUNDER GOD!

SPARKS SKID FROM BENEATH THE MIGHTY STALLION'S HOOVES AS HE CLEARS THE CREST--!
HA! LOST 'IM!

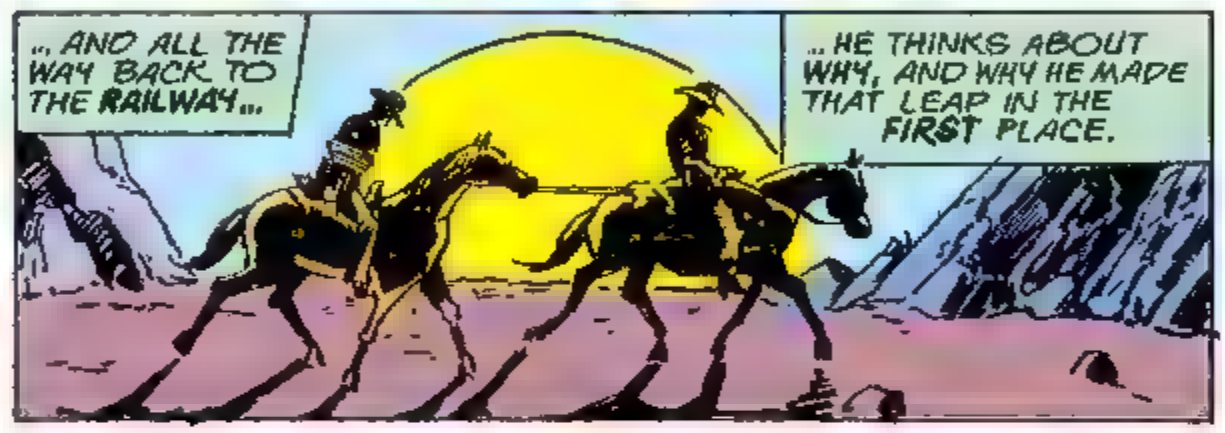

YOU ALWAYS WERE TOO QUICK ON THE DRAW, CHAVO!
MADRE DI DIOS!

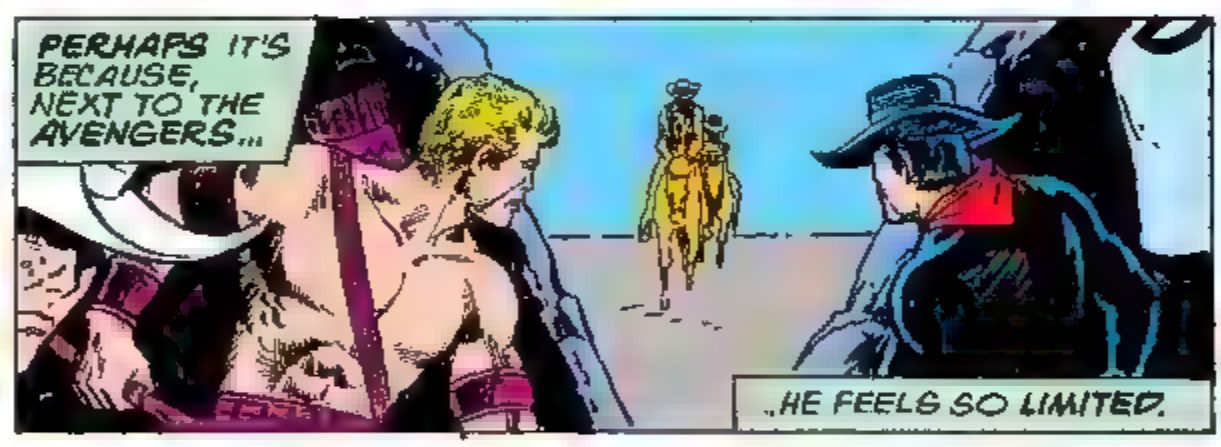
THE IMPACT OF THE LEAP NEARLY KILLS BOTH MEN ON THE SPOT!

CHAVO HITS THE GROUND HARD, ALREADY HALF UN-CONSCIOUS! THE KID IS WINDED, AND SORE--

--BUT HE FORCES HIMSELF TO FIGHT ON, DRIVING HIS LEADEN ARMS TO PUMMEL THE BANDIT--

--LONG AFTER CHAVO JUAREZ SLUMPS COMPLETELY UNCONSCIOUS, IN FACT.
IN TIME, THE KID REALIZES WHAT HE'S DOING...


...AND ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE RAILWAY...
...HE THINKS ABOUT WHY, AND WHY HE MADE THAT LEAP IN THE FIRST PLACE.


PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE, NEXT TO THE AVENGERS...
...HE FEELS SO LIMITED.

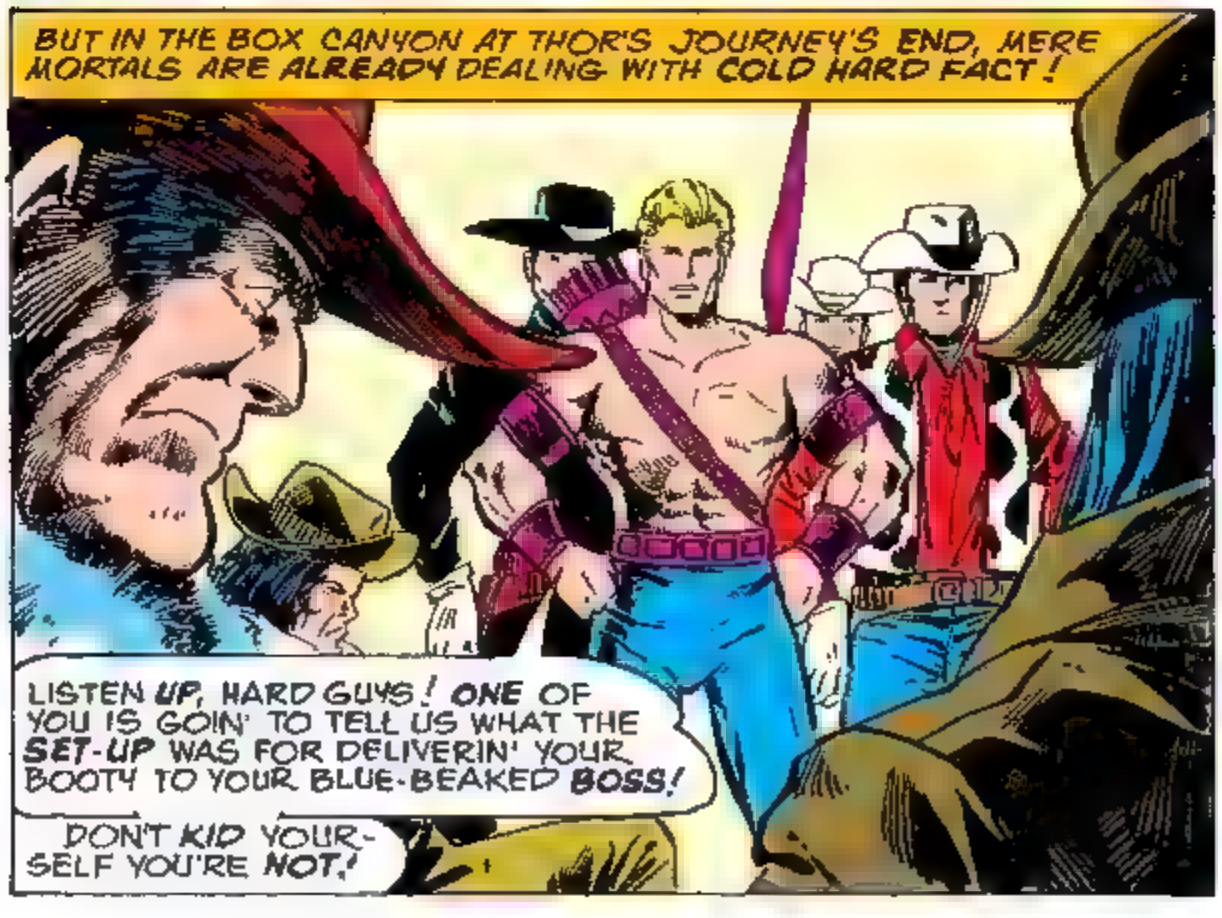
EVERY-THING'S SET!

SEE, PRIESTESS! ABOVE YONDER, MESA--!
AN ARROW-- YES! IT IS TIMED TO EXPLODE--

--NOW!

ONE DAY, THOU MUST EXPLAIN HOW IT IS THOU SHOULDST KNOW SUCH THINGS, MOONDRAGON!
FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, 'TIS ENOUGH--

--TO TAKE ONCE MORE TO THE HEAVENS!
ANOTHER LEGEND OF THE WEST HAS BEEN BIRTHED THIS SUMMER'S EVE!


BUT IN THE BOX CANYON AT THOR'S JOURNEY'S END, MERE MORTALS ARE ALREADY DEALING WITH COLD HARD FACT!
LISTEN UP, HARD GUYS! ONE OF YOU IS GOIN' TO TELL US WHAT THE SET-UP WAS FOR DELIVERIN' YOUR BOOTY TO YOUR BLUE-BEAKED BOSS!
DON'T KID YOUR-SELF YOU'RE NOT!

AND THEN, ME AN' A FEW'A THE BOYS ARE GONNA BEGIN THE--
ASSAULT ON CASTLE KANG!

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
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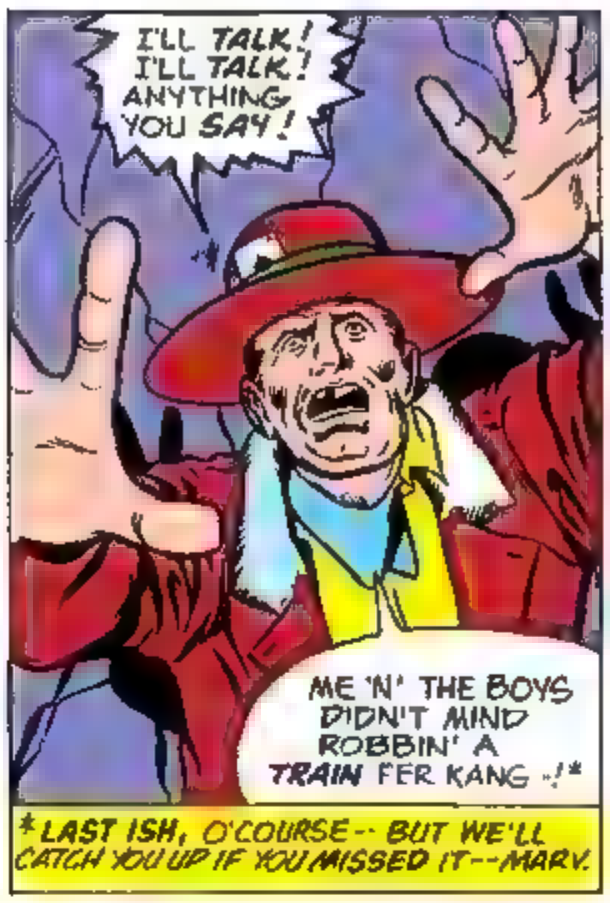
JAN
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!!
AT LAST!! THE FINAL BATTLE AGAINST THE POWER OF KANG!
THE AVENGERS BREAK LOOSE!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!** TM

AN **AVENGERS** ADVENTURE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT -- BREWED UP OVER AN OPEN FIRE BY...

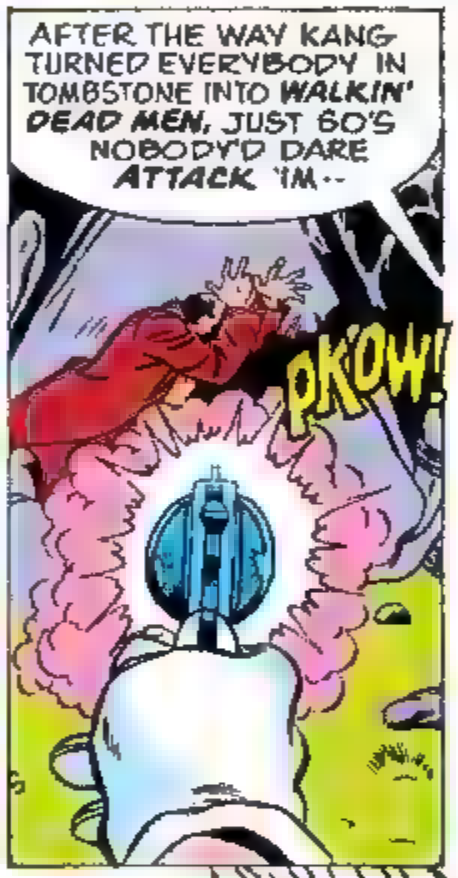
STEVE ENGLEHART & GEORGE PEREZ WORDS & PICTURES	SAM GRAINGER INKER	T. ORZECHOWSKI, LETTERER G. ROUSSOS, COLORIST	MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR


I'LL TALK! I'LL TALK! ANYTHING YOU SAY!
ME 'N' THE BOYS DIDN'T MIND ROBBIN' A TRAIN FER KANG -!*
*LAST ISH, O'COURSE -- BUT WE'LL CATCH YOU UP IF YOU MISSED IT--MARV.

WORKIN' FER HIM SEEMED LIKE A RIGHT SMART THING TO DO! BUT HE DIDN'T WARN US ABOUT THESE OTHER DUDES LIKE HIM--
--OR YOU 'N' RAWHIDE 'N' THE REST!

HAWKEYE, THOR AND MOONDRAGON CAME FROM THE FUTURE, ACE -- JUST TO HOGTIE YOUR BOSS--

KPOW!
--AN' WE'RE WORKIN' WITH THEM-- FER FREE!


AFTER THE WAY KANG TURNED EVERYBODY IN TOMBSTONE INTO WALKIN' DEAD MEN, JUST 60'S NOBODY'D DARE ATTACK 'IM--
PKOW!

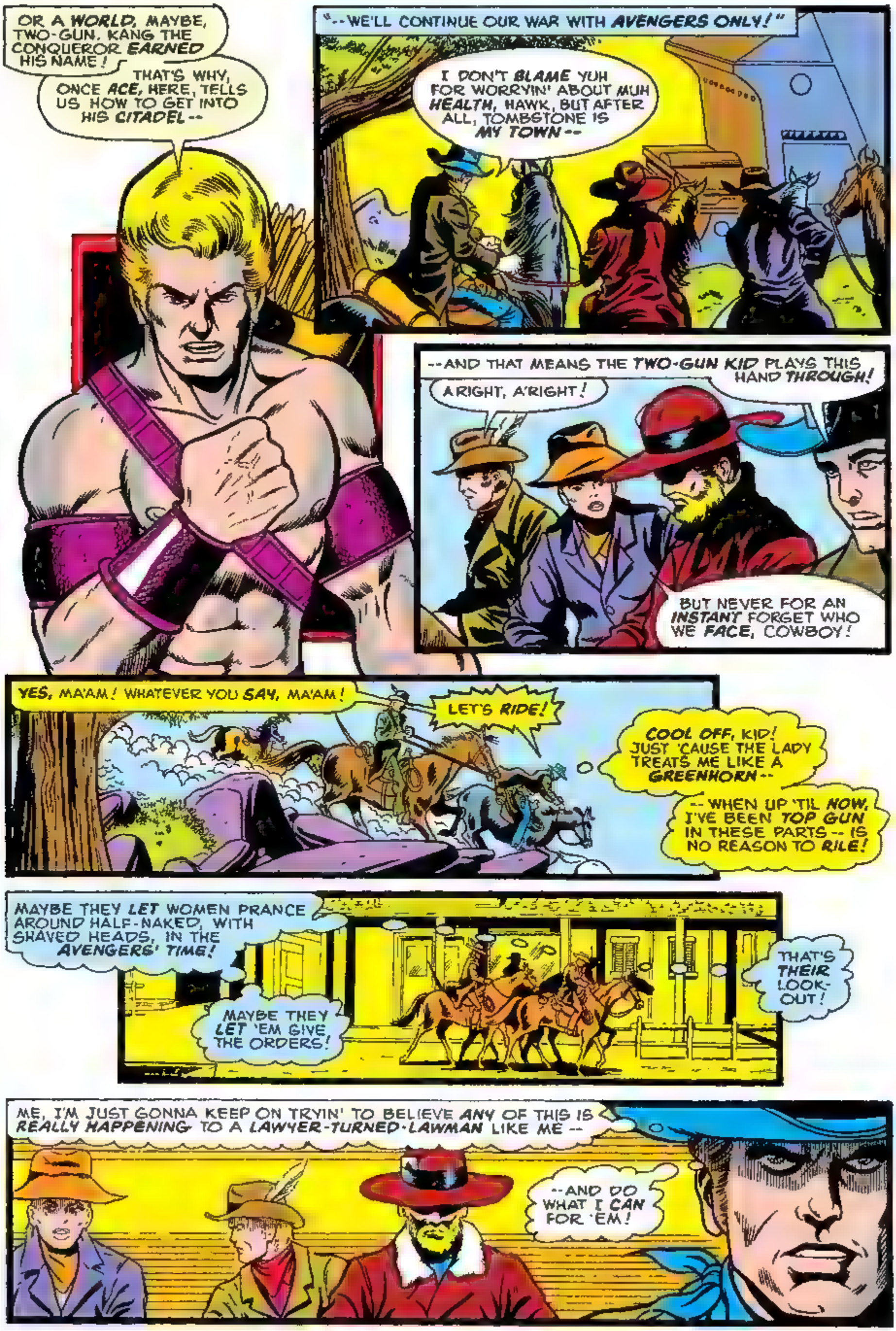
--IT JEST SEEMED A RIGHT SMART THING TO DO!

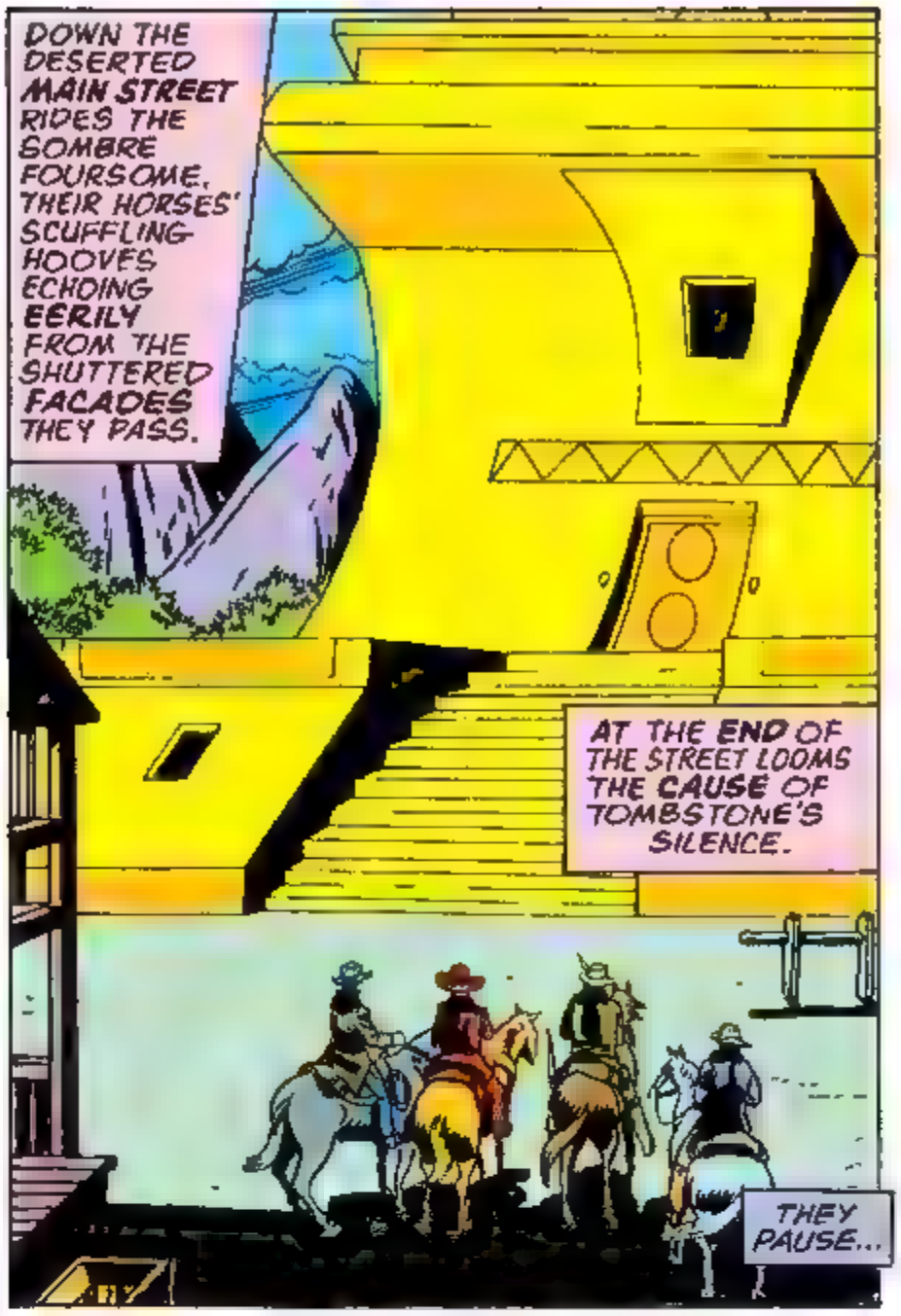
ENOW, KID COLT! HE WILL SPEAK NOW!
LISSEN, PARD-- YOU MAY BE A GOD, AN' YOU MAY NOT--
--BUT I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH ACE!

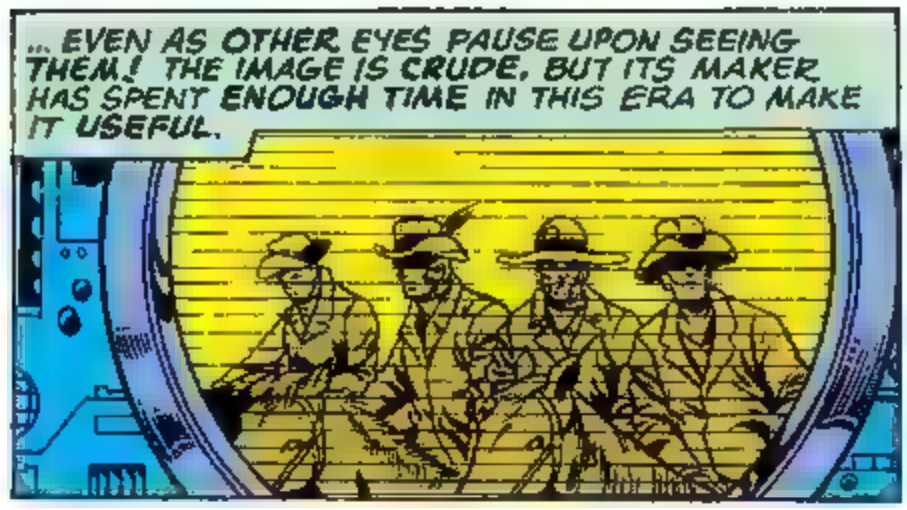
LET IM GO, GOLDILOCKS! TILL YOU AN' THE DRAGON LADY POPPED IN, THE KIDS 'N' ME WERE RUNNIN' THIS SHOW!
YOU TELL IM, HAWK EYE!

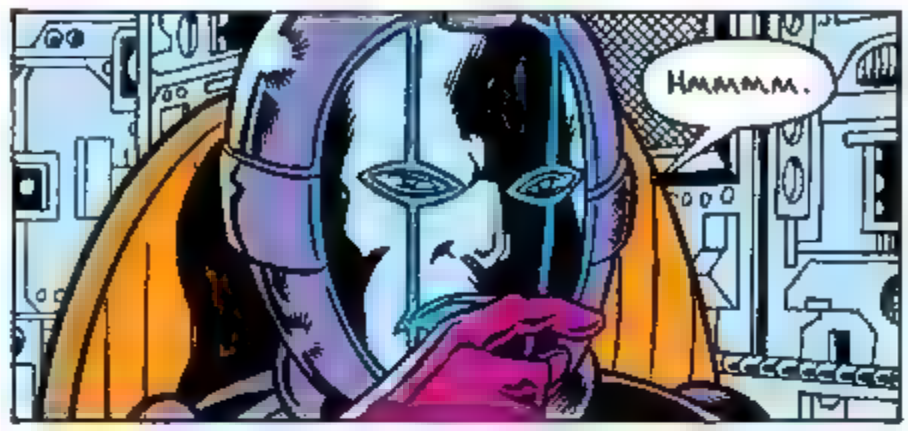
NEVERTHELESS, WE WORK TOGETHER NOW, AS KID COLT SAID--
- AND WE SHALL WORK WITH HONOR!

THERE'S NO NEED FOR ARGUMENT, MEN! I, FOR ONE, AM MORE THAN GLAD TO HELP THE THUNDER GOD!
AFTER ALL, WE STILL HAVE A TOWN TO SAVE!


OR A WORLD, MAYBE, TWO-GUN, KANG THE CONQUEROR EARNED HIS NAME!
THAT'S WHY, ONCE ACE, HERE, TELLS US HOW TO GET INTO HIS CITADEL --
"--WE'LL CONTINUE OUR WAR WITH AVENGERS ONLY!"
I DON'T BLAME YUH FOR WORRYIN' ABOUT MUH HEALTH, HAWK, BUT AFTER ALL, TOMBSTONE IS MY TOWN --
--AND THAT MEANS THE TWO-GUN KID PLAYS THIS HAND THROUGH!
A'RIGHT, A'RIGHT!
BUT NEVER FOR AN INSTANT FORGET WHO WE FACE, COWBOY!
YES, MA'AM! WHATEVER YOU SAY, MA'AM!
LET'S RIDE!
COOL OFF, KID! JUST 'CAUSE THE LADY TREATS ME LIKE A GREENHORN --
-- WHEN UP 'TIL NOW, I'VE BEEN TOP GUN IN THESE PARTS -- IS NO REASON TO RILE!
MAYBE THEY LET WOMEN PRANCE AROUND HALF-NAKED, WITH SHAVED HEADS, IN THE AVENGERS' TIME!
MAYBE THEY LET 'EM GIVE THE ORDERS!
THAT'S THEIR LOOK-OUT!
ME, I'M JUST GONNA KEEP ON TRYIN' TO BELIEVE ANY OF THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING TO A LAWYER-TURNED-LAWMAN LIKE ME --
--AND DO WHAT I CAN FOR 'EM!


DOWN THE DESERTED MAIN STREET RIDES THE SOMBRE FOURSOME, THEIR HORSES' SCUFFLING HOOVES ECHOING EERILY FROM THE SHUTTERED FACADES THEY PASS.
AT THE END OF THE STREET LOOMS THE CAUSE OF TOMBSTONE'S SILENCE.
THEY PAUSE...

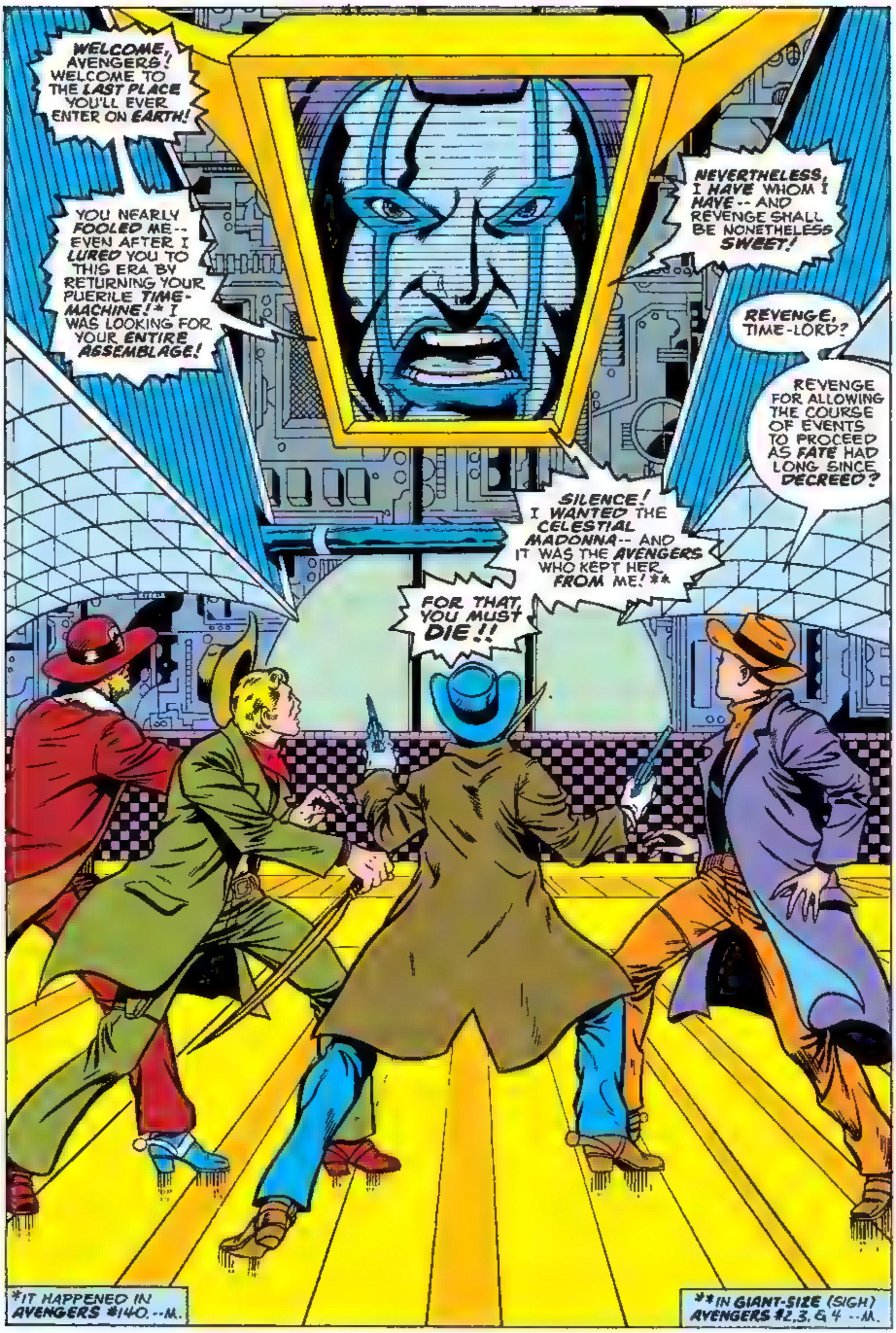

... EVEN AS OTHER EYES PAUSE UPON SEEING THEM! THE IMAGE IS CRUDE, BUT ITS MAKER HAS SPENT ENOUGH TIME IN THIS ERA TO MAKE IT USEFUL.


HMMMM.

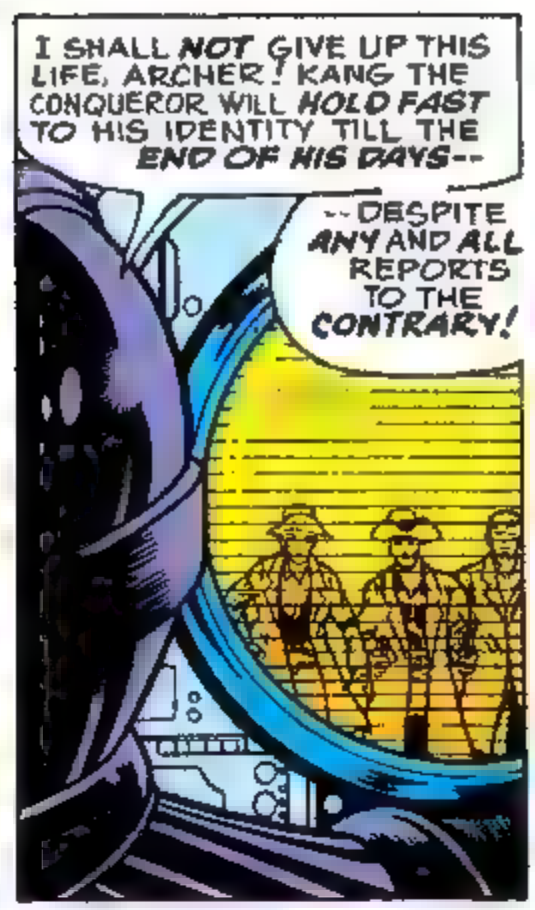
BETTER LET ME AN' MOONDRAGON GO FIRST, TWO-GUN.
ACE GAVE FREELY OF HIS PASSWORD, BUT KANG MAY HAVE PROTECTIVE DEVICES!
IN FACT, I SUDDENLY FEEL HE'S DISCOVERED OUR DECEPTION ALREADY!

YOU WHAT--? LISTEN, MA'AM---
JEHOSAPHAT!

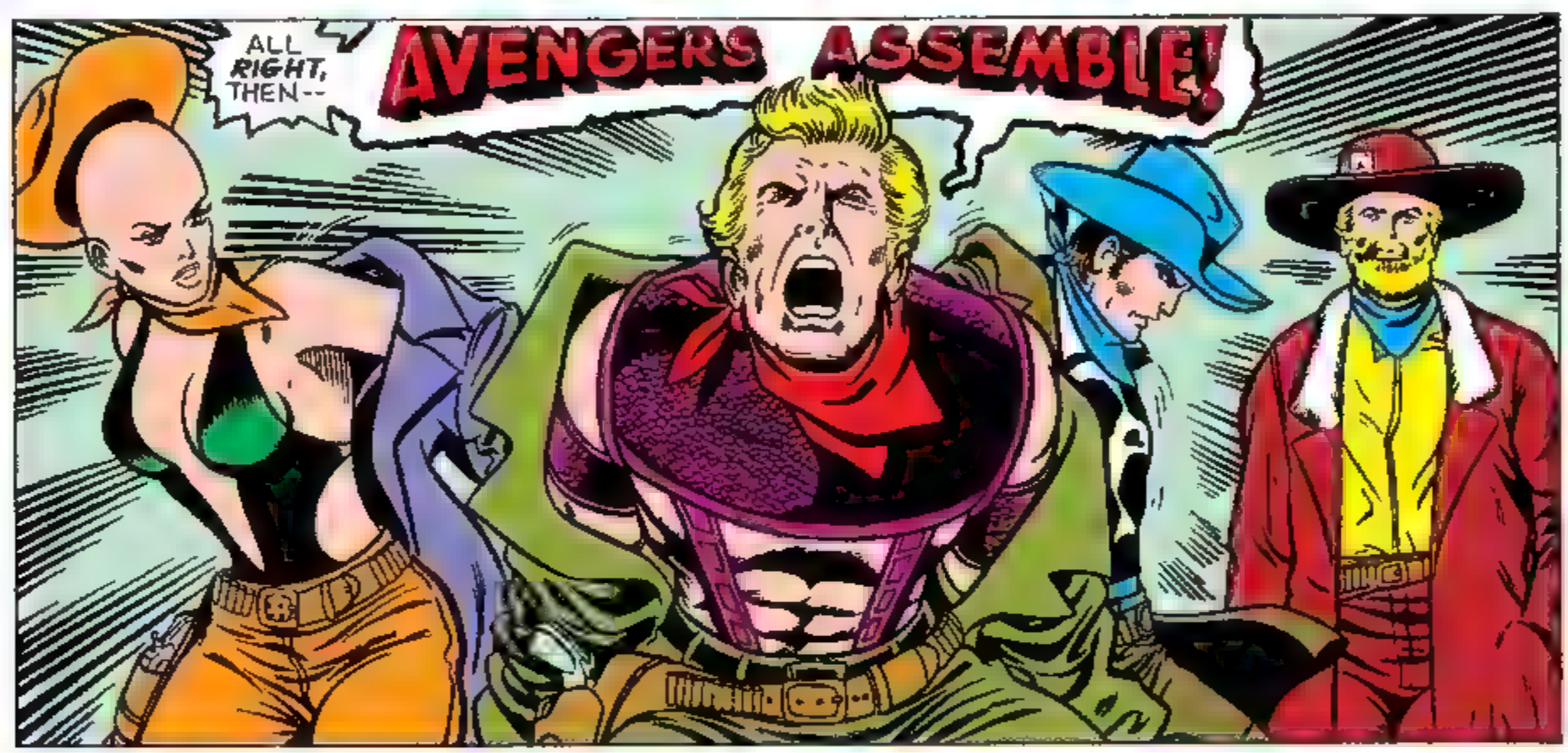
A CLOUD OF WARMTH BILLOWS OUT INTO THE CRISP NIGHT AIR. ALL AROUND, THE CRICKETS CEASE THEIR SONG.
LOOKS LIKE THE DRAGON LADY CALLED IT, GROUP!
HERE'S WHERE WE DO OR DIE!


WELCOME, AVENGERS! WELCOME TO THE LAST PLACE YOU'LL EVER ENTER ON EARTH!
YOU NEARLY FOOLED ME -- EVEN AFTER I LURED YOU TO THIS ERA BY RETURNING YOUR PUERILE TIME-MACHINE!* I WAS LOOKING FOR YOUR ENTIRE ASSEMBLAGE!
NEVERTHELESS, I HAVE WHOM I HAVE -- AND REVENGE SHALL BE NONETHELESS SWEET!
REVENGE, TIME-LORD?
REVENGE FOR ALLOWING THE COURSE OF EVENTS TO PROCEED AS FATE HAD LONG SINCE DECREED?
SILENCE! I WANTED THE CELESTIAL MADONNA -- AND IT WAS THE AVENGERS WHO KEPT HER FROM ME!**
FOR THAT, YOU MUST DIE!!
*IT HAPPENED IN AVENGERS #140. -- M.
**IN GIANT-SIZE (SIGH) AVENGERS #2, 3, & 4 -- M.

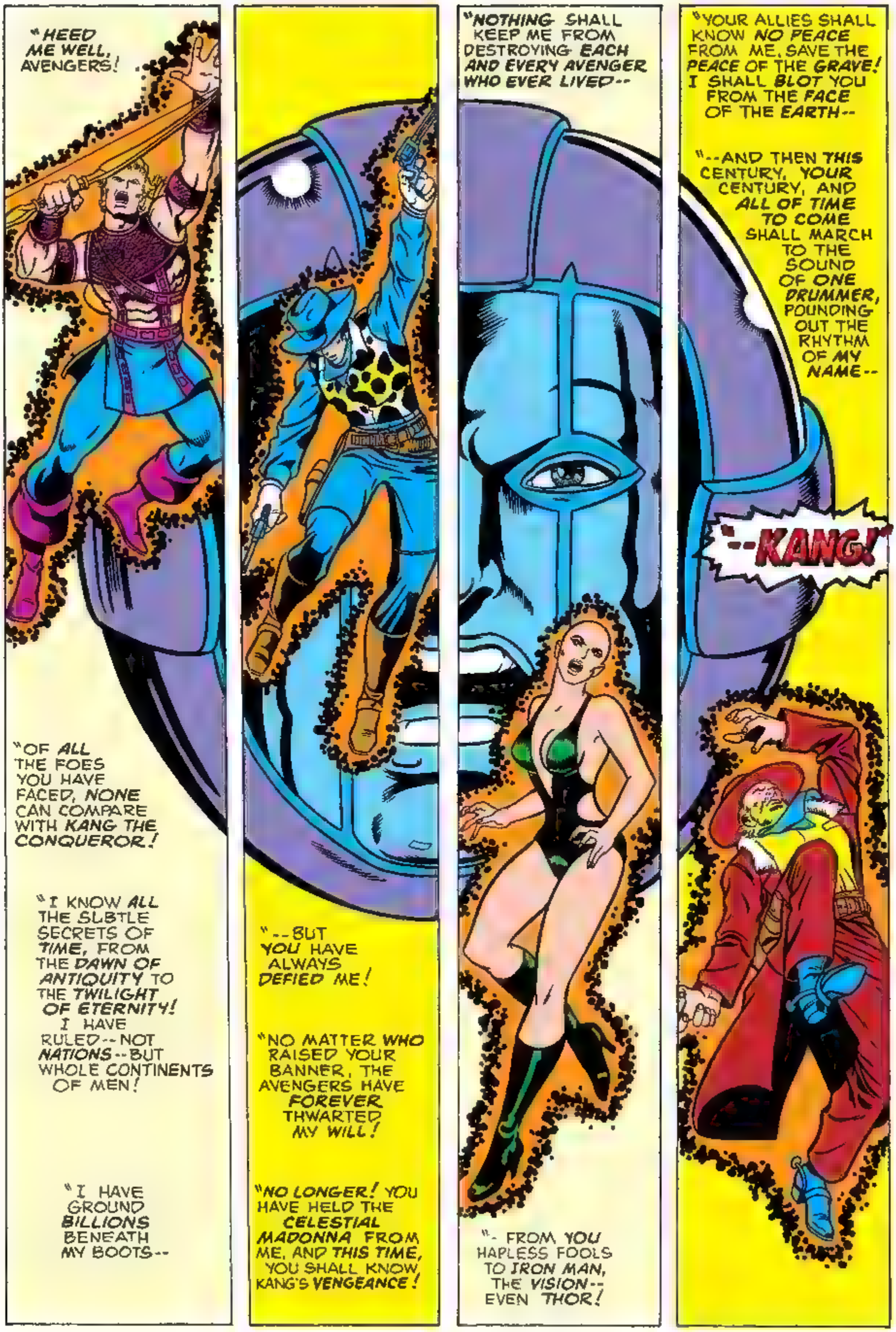
YOU BLUE-NOSED BABOON! I'VE HEARD OF FIXATIONS BEFORE, BUT YOU TAKE THE CAKE!
EVERYBODY KNOWS YOU'RE GONNA GIVE UP THIS LIFE IN TIME! WHY GIVE YOURSELF SO MUCH TO REGRET?


I SHALL NOT GIVE UP THIS LIFE, ARCHER! KANG THE CONQUEROR WILL HOLD FAST TO HIS IDENTITY TILL THE END OF HIS DAYS--
--DESPITE ANY AND ALL REPORTS TO THE CONTRARY!

I'LL REGRET NOTHING --
--LEAST OF ALL, YOUR DEATHS!

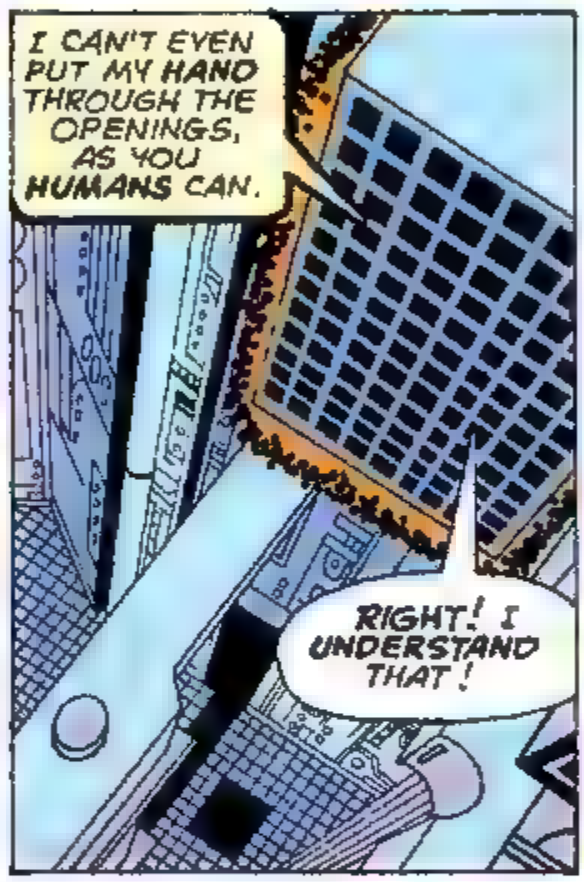

ALL RIGHT, THEN--
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

CRETIN.


"HEED ME WELL, AVENGERS!
"OF ALL THE FOES YOU HAVE FACED, NONE CAN COMPARE WITH KANG THE CONQUEROR!
"I KNOW ALL THE SUBTLE SECRETS OF TIME, FROM THE DAWN OF ANTIQUITY TO THE TWILIGHT OF ETERNITY! I HAVE RULED--NOT NATIONS--BUT WHOLE CONTINENTS OF MEN!
"I HAVE GROUND BILLIONS BENEATH MY BOOTS--
"--BUT YOU HAVE ALWAYS DEFIED ME!
"NO MATTER WHO RAISED YOUR BANNER, THE AVENGERS HAVE FOREVER THWARTED MY WILL!
"NO LONGER! YOU HAVE HELD THE CELESTIAL MADONNA FROM ME, AND THIS TIME, YOU SHALL KNOW KANG'S VENGEANCE!
"NOTHING SHALL KEEP ME FROM DESTROYING EACH AND EVERY AVENGER WHO EVER LIVED--
"- FROM YOU HAPLESS FOOLS TO IRON MAN, THE VISION--EVEN THOR!
"YOUR ALLIES SHALL KNOW NO PEACE FROM ME, SAVE THE PEACE OF THE GRAVE! I SHALL BLOT YOU FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH--
"--AND THEN THIS CENTURY, YOUR CENTURY, AND ALL OF TIME TO COME SHALL MARCH TO THE SOUND OF ONE DRUMMER, POUNDING OUT THE RHYTHM OF MY NAME--
"--KANG!"

NOW HERE'S MY PLAN!
MEANWHILE, IN A CAREFULLY-CONSTRUCTED CAGE HIDDEN DEEP WITHIN THE RECESSES OF THE BRAND CORPORATION (A WHOLLY-OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF ROXXON OIL)...

VISION, WE'RE GOING TO NEED YOUR POWERS OF INTANGIBILITY!
BUT... CAP...
... I'VE ALREADY ATTEMPTED TO PASS THROUGH THESE BARS.*
THEIR ALIEN ENERGY NULLIFIES MY ABILITIES.
*LAST ISSUE.--M.

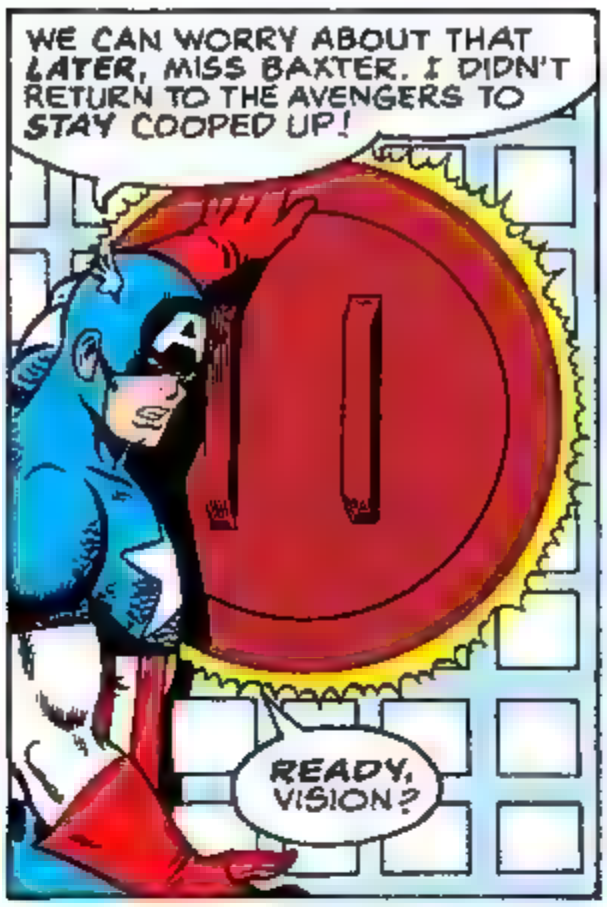

I CAN'T EVEN PUT MY HAND THROUGH THE OPENINGS, AS YOU HUMANS CAN.
RIGHT! I UNDERSTAND THAT!

BUT YOU CAN PUT YOUR HAND-- YOUR WHOLE BODY--THROUGH MY SHIELD!
SURE!

AND CAP CAN PUT THE SHIELD RIGHT IN THE ENERGY FLOW--
--SO YOU'D ACTUALLY BE REACHING THROUGH IT AND NOT THE CAGE! OUTTA SIGHT!

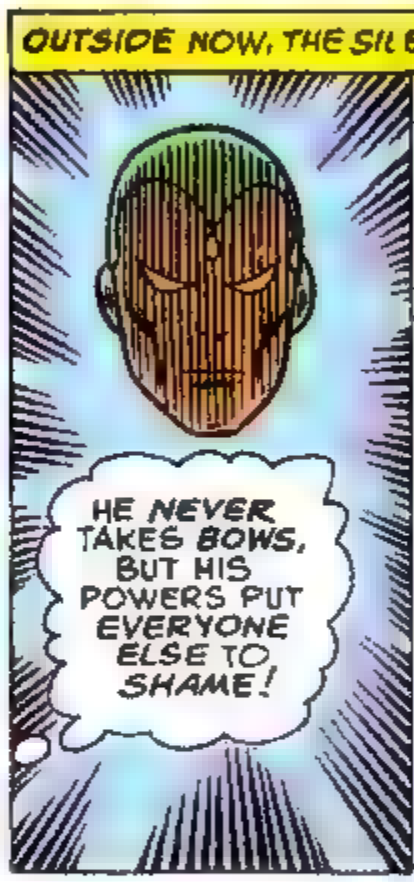
I SEE YOU HARBOR A BRAIN BENEATH YOUR ROUGH EXTERIOR, BEAST.
Shhh! YOU'LL RUIN MY SOCIAL LIFE!

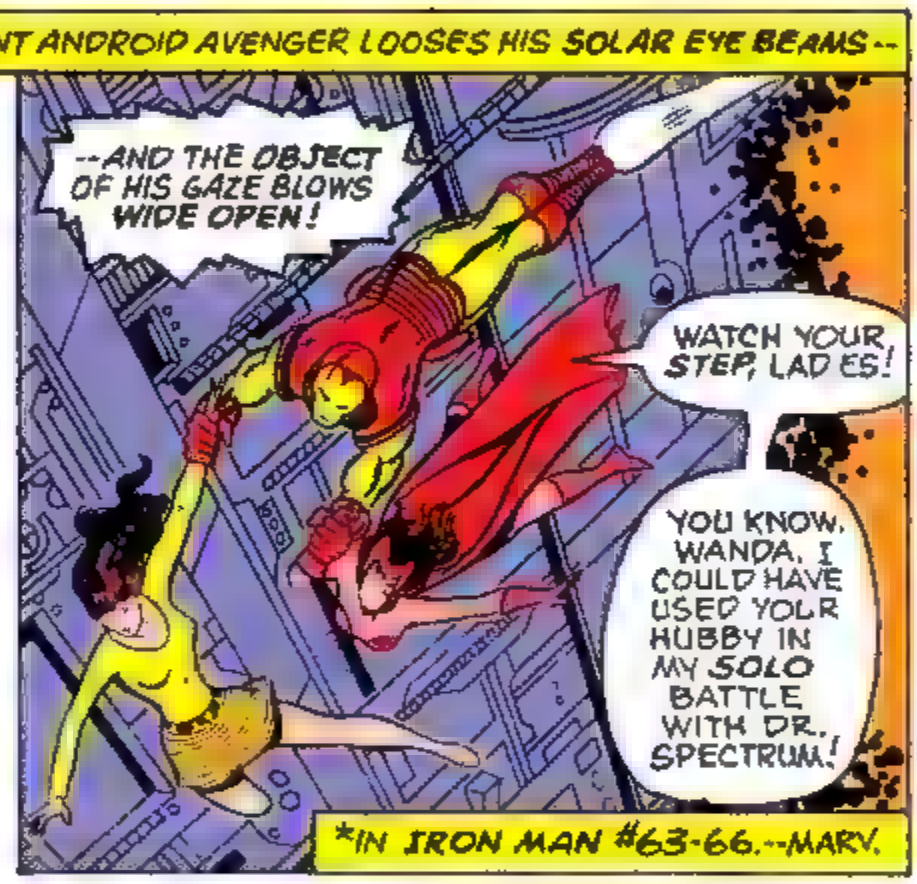
YOUR SOCIAL LIFE? I'M THE ONE WHOSE EX-HUSBAND HELPED STICK US IN HERE!
YOU HONORED OUR AGREEMENT, BEAST--*
--BUT I'M BEGINNING TO WISH YOU'D TURNED ME DOWN!
*SO FAR, ONLY THEY KNOW WHAT IT WAS. --MARV.


WE CAN WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER, MISS BAXTER. I DIDN'T RETURN TO THE AVENGERS TO STAY COOPED UP!
READY, VISION?

HE'S THROUGH!

WELL DONE! I TOLD THE SQUADRON SUPREME NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE US!
INCREDIBLE! MY MAN IS INCREDIBLE!

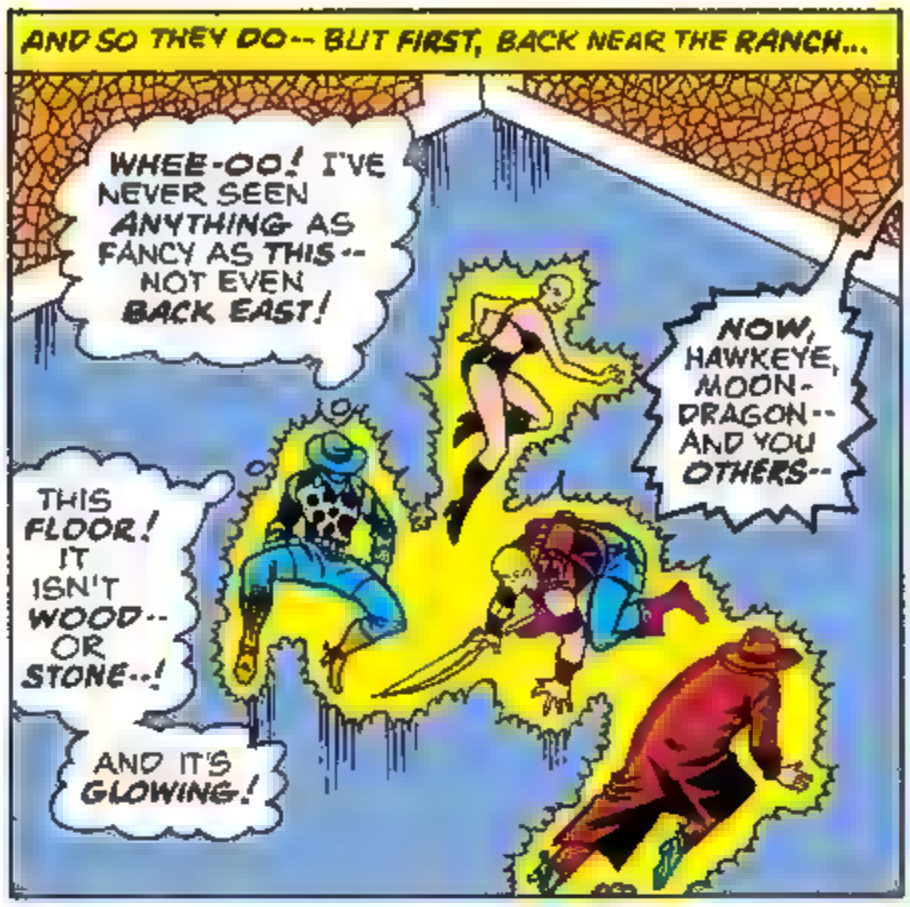

OUTSIDE NOW, THE SILENT ANDROID AVENGER LOOSES HIS SOLAR EYE BEAMS--
HE NEVER TAKES BOWS, BUT HIS POWERS PUT EVERYONE ELSE TO SHAME!


--AND THE OBJECT OF HIS GAZE BLOWS WIDE OPEN!
WATCH YOUR STEP, LAD ES!
YOU KNOW, WANDA, I COULD HAVE USED YOUR HUBBY IN MY SOLO BATTLE WITH DR. SPECTRUM!
*IN IRON MAN #63-66.--MARV.

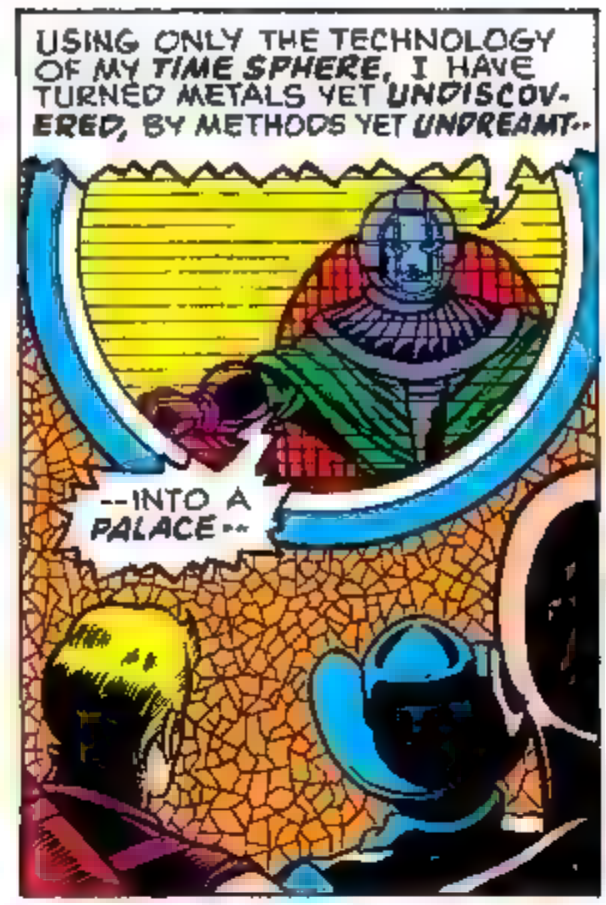
EVERY DAY, I SEE MORE WISDOM IN HAVING HELPED FOUND THIS TEAM!

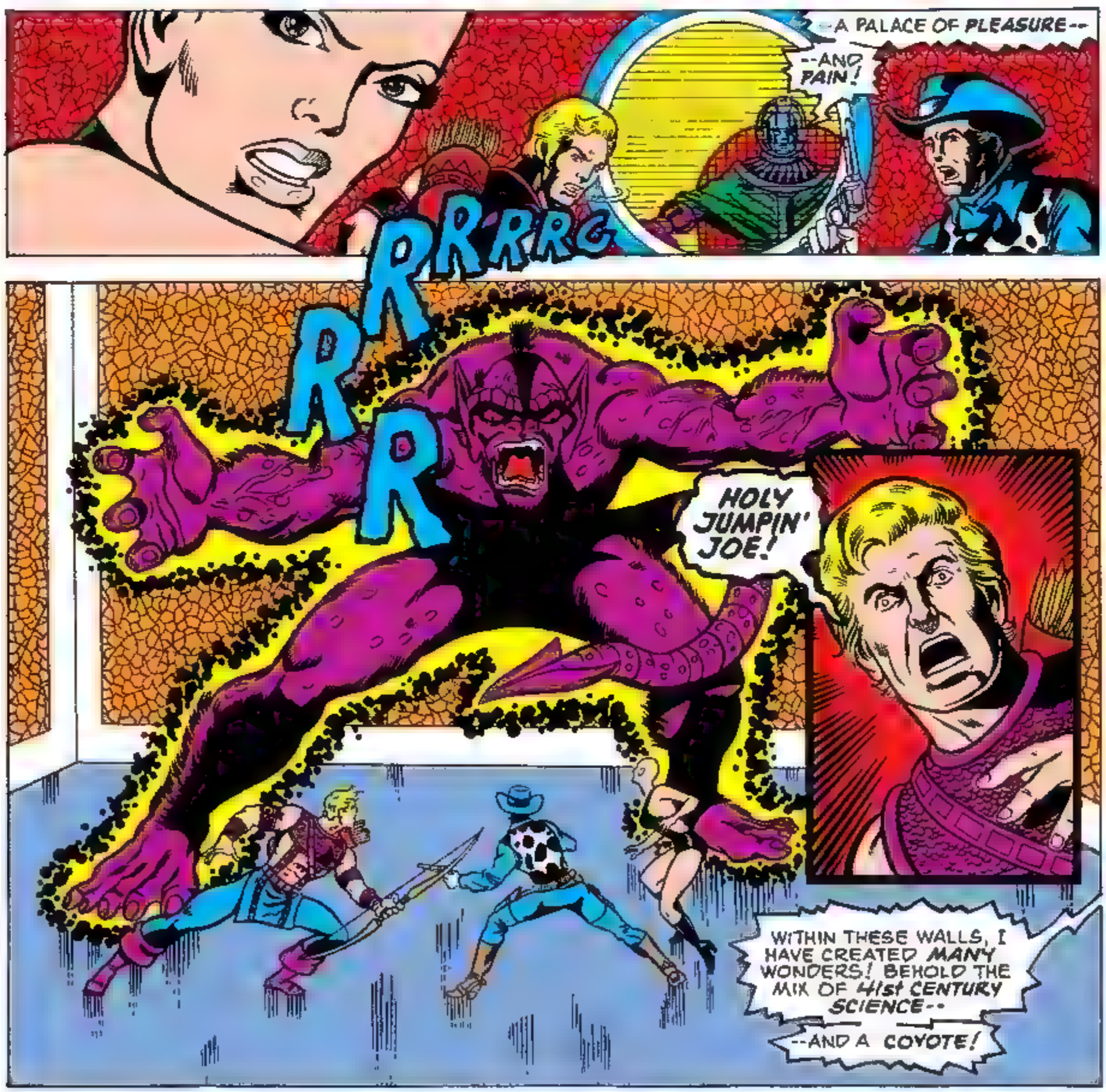
NUTS, I.M.! SPECTRUM AND HIS PALS WERE LOST FROM THE START!
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY--
..."FOUR WALLS DO NOT A PRISM MAKE!"

YOU'RE REALLY CONSIDERING THIS GUY FOR MEMBERSHIP, HUH?
COME ON, HEROES--
--WE HAVE SOME PEOPLE TO SEE!

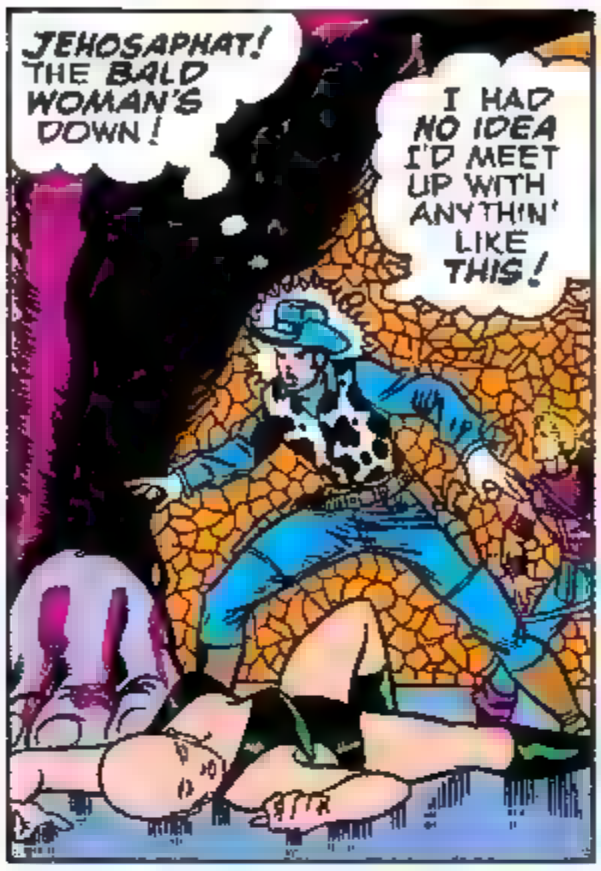

AND SO THEY DO-- BUT FIRST, BACK NEAR THE RANCH...
WHEE-OO! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING AS FANCY AS THIS-- NOT EVEN BACK EAST!
NOW, HAWKEYE, MOON-DRAGON-- AND YOU OTHERS--
THIS FLOOR! IT ISN'T WOOD-- OR STONE--!
AND IT'S GLOWING!

--YOU MUST LEARN WHAT KANG CAN ACCOMPLISH, EVEN IN THESE PRIMITIVE AGES!


USING ONLY THE TECHNOLOGY OF MY TIME SPHERE, I HAVE TURNED METALS YET UNDISCOVERED, BY METHODS YET UNDREAMT--
--INTO A PALACE--


--A PALACE OF PLEASURE--
--AND PAIN!
RRRRRG
HOLY JUMPIN' JOE!
WITHIN THESE WALLS, I HAVE CREATED MANY WONDERS! BEHOLD THE MIX OF 41st CENTURY SCIENCE--
--AND A COYOTE!

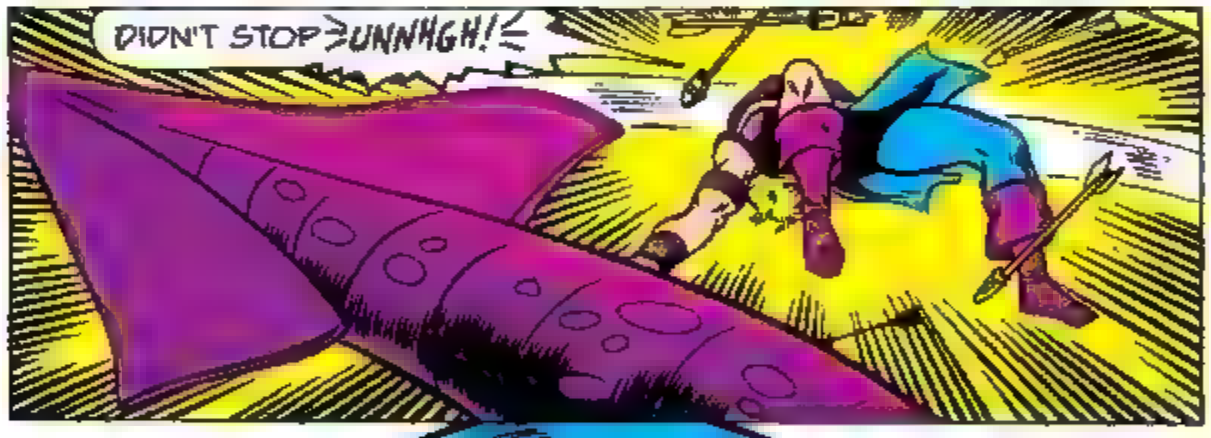
THWOK!


JEHOSAPHAT! THE BALD WOMAN'S DOWN!
I HAD NO IDEA I'D MEET UP WITH ANYTHIN' LIKE THIS!

TWO-GUN, OLD SON, YOU'D BETTER HOPE THIS CRITTER HATES LEAD--
--OR GET READY FOR THE LAST ROUND-UP!

THE KID DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S UP AGAINST--
--AND I'M NOT SURE I DO!
I JUST HOPE--

GRRRR
BAM! BOM!


DIDN'T STOP ≥UNNHGH!≤

HA HA HA HA HA! HOW LONG I HAVE WAITED FOR THIS! EACH TIME BEFORE, THEY'VE SOMEHOW SLIPPED THRU MY FINGERS--
--BUT NOW, AT LAST, THE AVENGERS ARE DOOMED!
?
DOOMED!!
HA HA HA HA

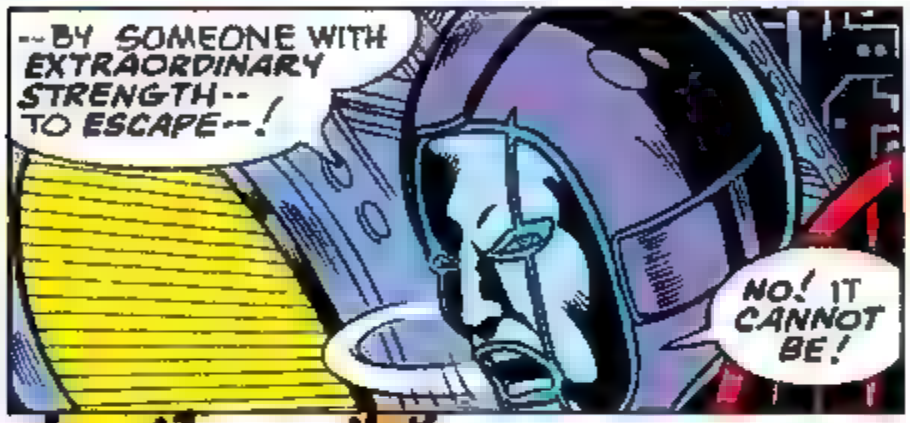
THE TWO REAL AVENGERS ARE FINISHED-- THE MASKED COWBOY IS MERE MOMENTS FROM HIS END-- AND THE BEARDED STRANGER--
EH? WHERE IS THE BEARDED STRANGER?

MY SCANNER DOESN'T PICK HIM UP ANYWHERE--

WAIT!

THERE IS A HOLE IN THE FAR WALL-- A GAPING HOLE!

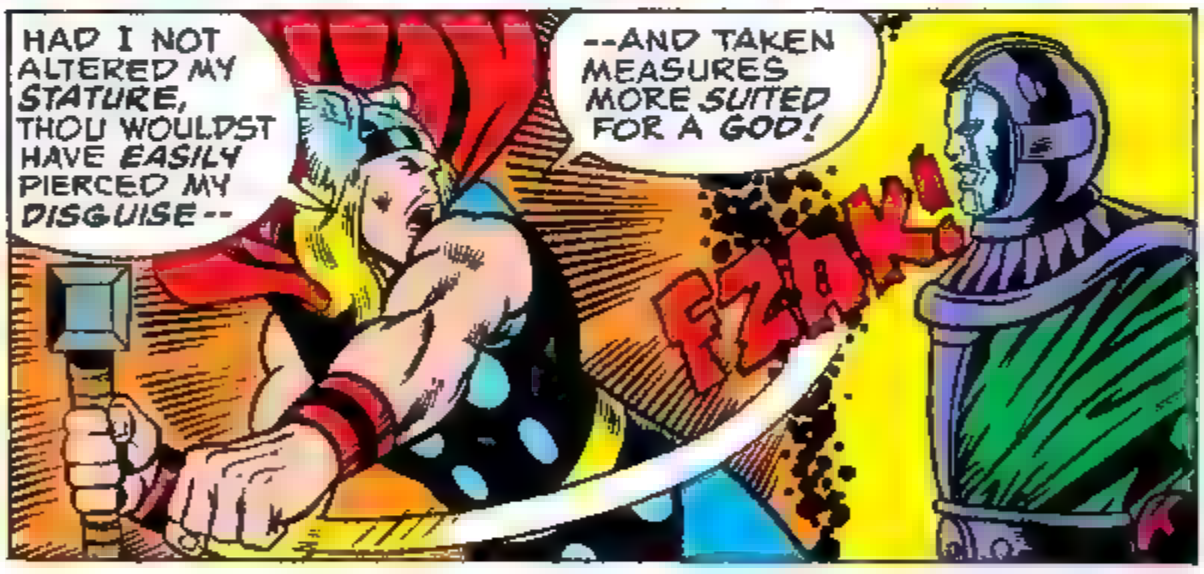
IT CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN MADE--

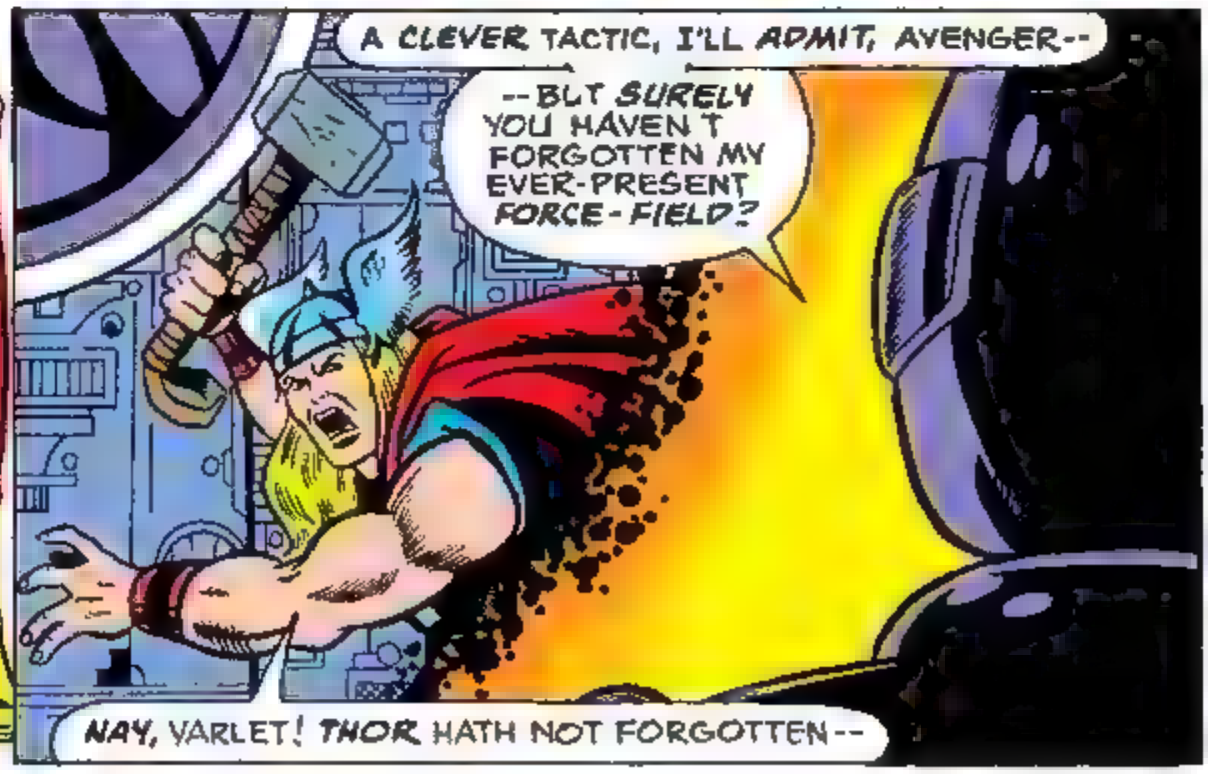

--BY SOMEONE WITH EXTRAORDINARY STRENGTH-- TO ESCAPE--!
NO! IT CANNOT BE!

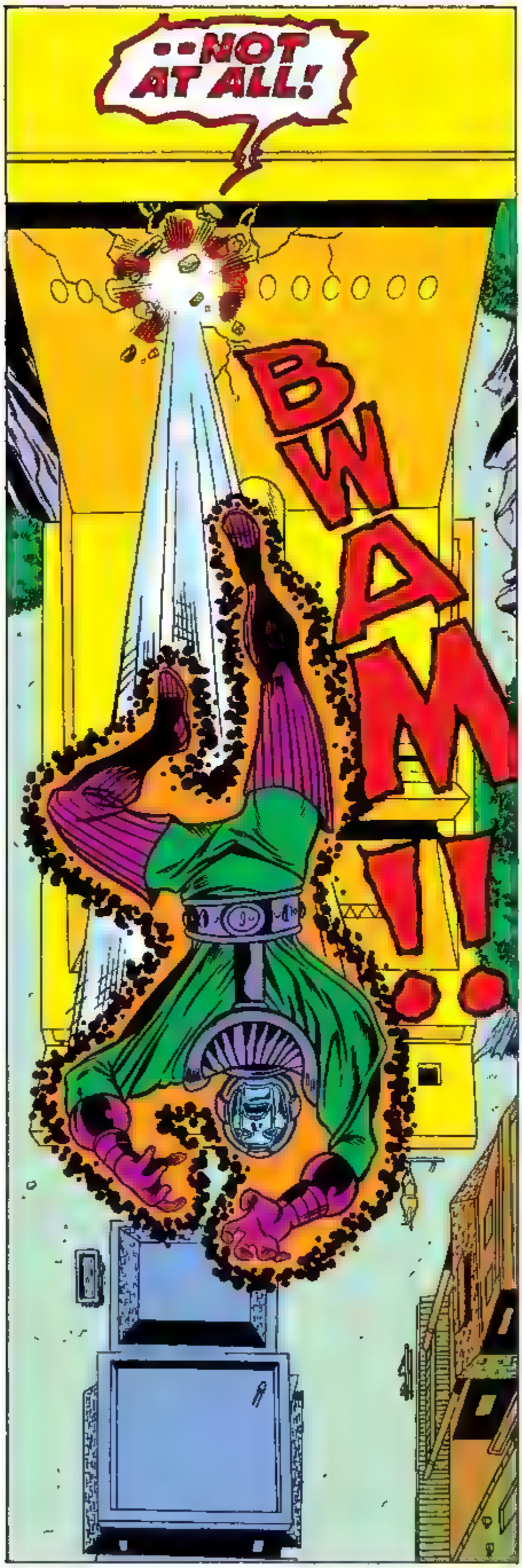
YES, KANG--

KTUNK!

--'TWAS THE MIGHTY THOR!


HAD I NOT ALTERED MY STATURE, THOU WOULDST HAVE EASILY PIERCED MY DISGUISE--
--AND TAKEN MEASURES MORE SUITED FOR A GOD!
FZAK!

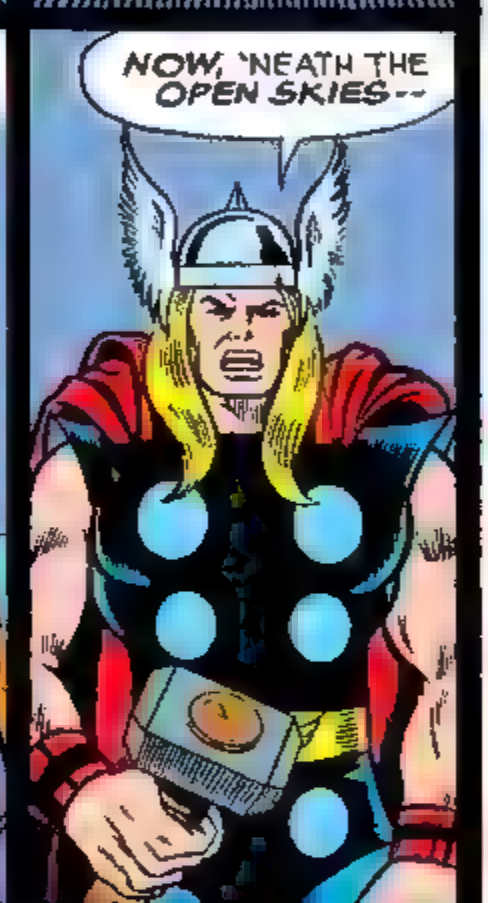

A CLEVER TACTIC, I'LL ADMIT, AVENGER--
--BUT SURELY YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN MY EVER-PRESENT FORCE-FIELD?
NAY, VARLET! THOR HATH NOT FORGOTTEN--


--NOT AT ALL!
BWAM!!

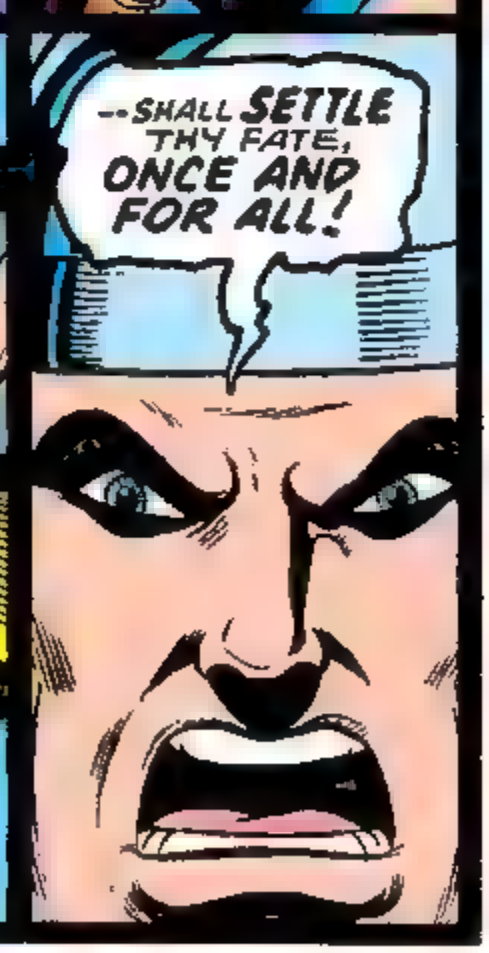
BLAST HIM! HE CAN'T ACTUALLY STRIKE MY PERSON--
WUMP!

--BUT IF HE MOVES MY PROTECTIVE FIELD, HE MOVES ME! I AM NOT ANCHORED TO THE GROUND!
I'VE BEEN OUSTED FROM MY CITADEL!

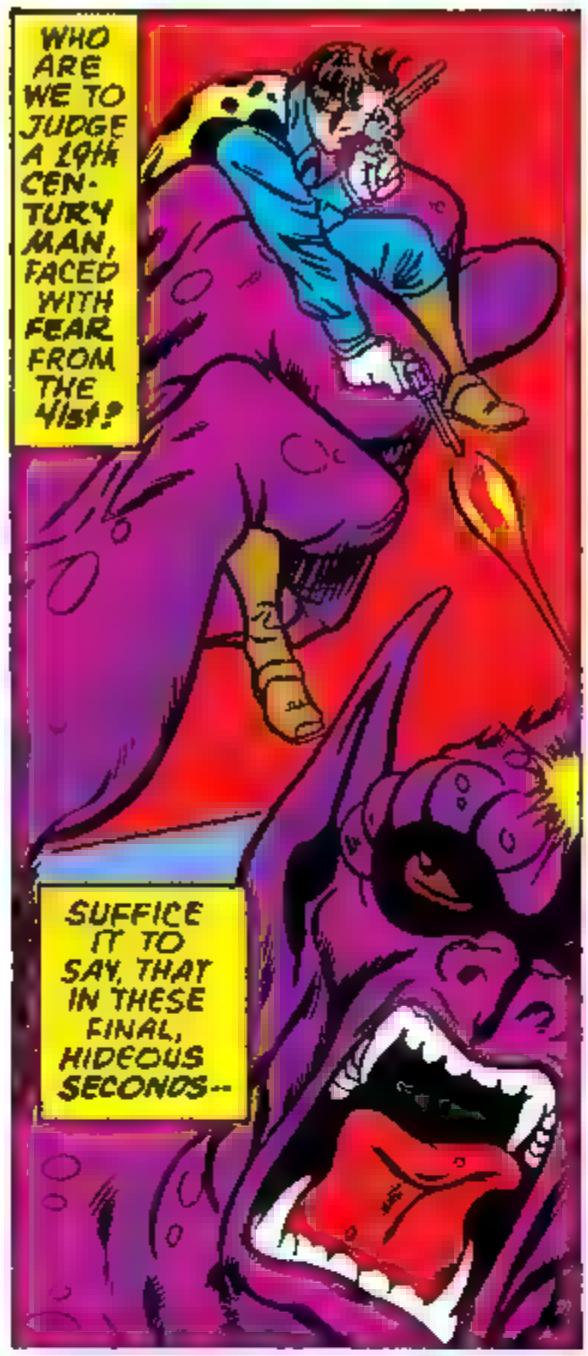
AS WAS MEANT TO BE, KNAVE!


NOW, 'NEATH THE OPEN SKIES--

--THOU AND I, HAND TO HAND--


--SHALL SETTLE THY FATE, ONCE AND FOR ALL!

AND EVEN AS THE TWO BERSERKERS BEGIN TO CLOSE UPON EACH OTHER, A GIANT HAND CLOSES HARD ON THE TWO-GUN KID!
MATT HAWK IS A BRAVE MAN-- ALWAYS HAS BEEN-- BUT HE IS A MAN OF A SIMPLER TIME, BEREFT OF COMICS, MOVIES, OR THE TUBE!
YOU AND I HAVE SEEN MANY MONSTERS. MATT HAWK HAS SEEN BUT ONE!


WHO ARE WE TO JUDGE A 19th CENTURY MAN, FACED WITH FEAR FROM THE 41st?
SUFFICE IT TO SAY, THAT IN THESE FINAL, HIDEOUS SECONDS--

--MATT HAWK PANICS!

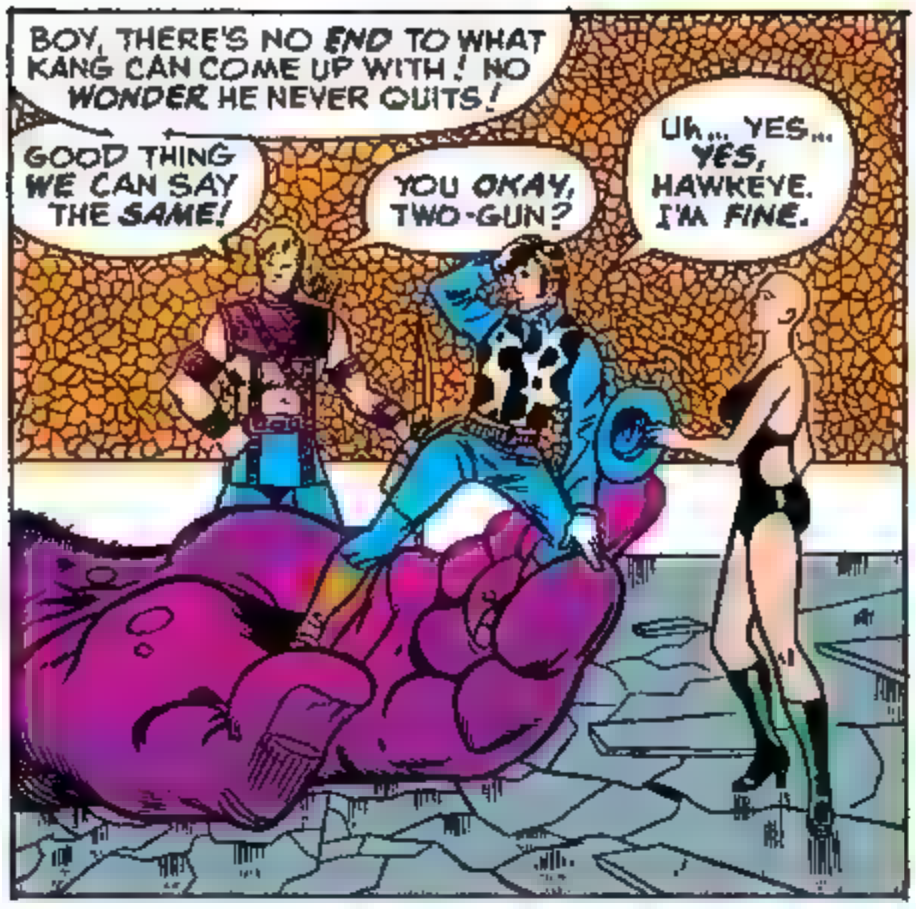
IT'S AN ACT TO ALTER ALL THE REST OF HIS DAYS!
ZUNNNN! ONLY MY TITAN-TRAINED REFLEXES COULD HAVE MAINTAINED MY LIFE...
...BUT...

...IT'S MY MIND THAT'S NEEDED NOW!

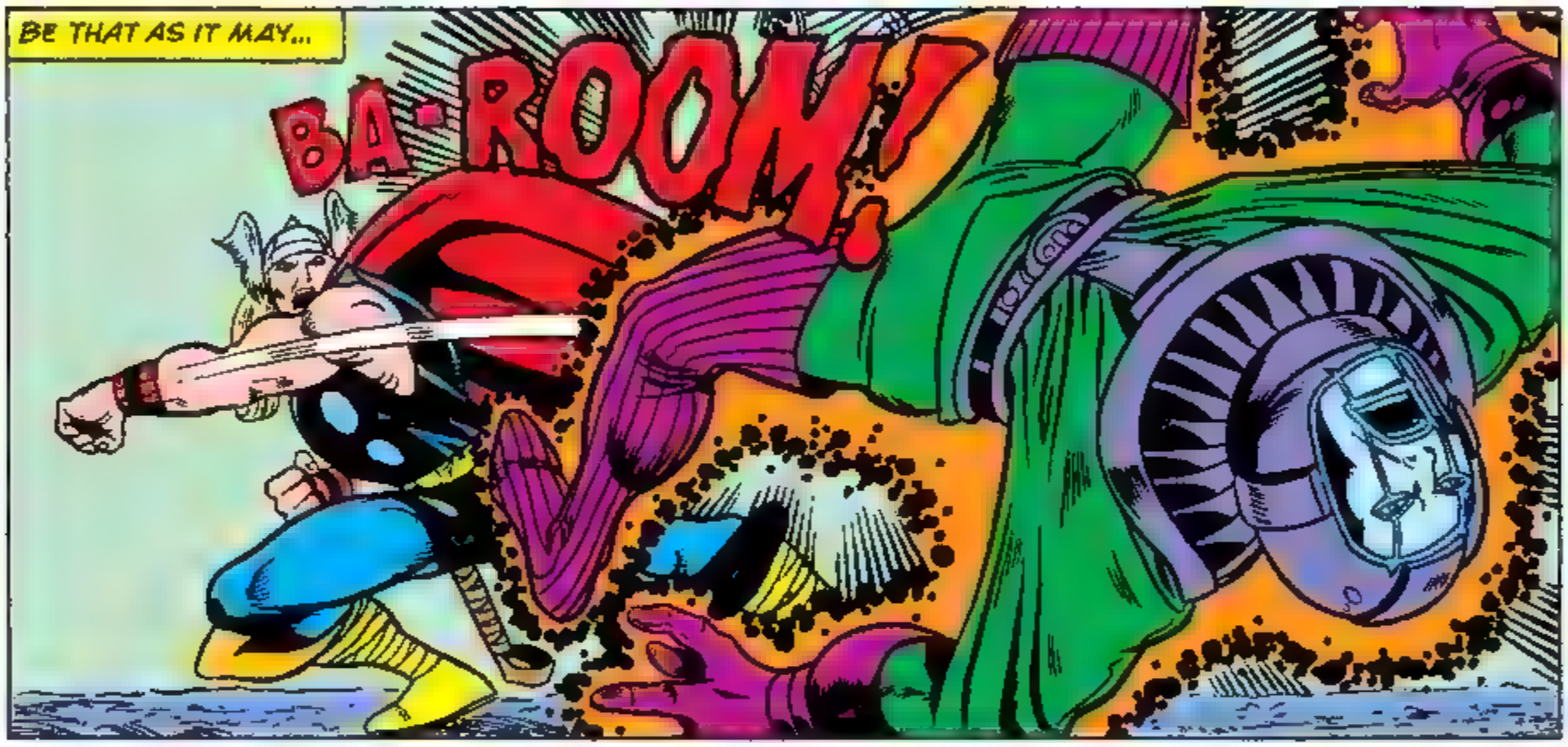
AS I TOLD THOR AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THIS VENTURE--
-- IT WAS NOT A TASK FOR MERE MORTALS!

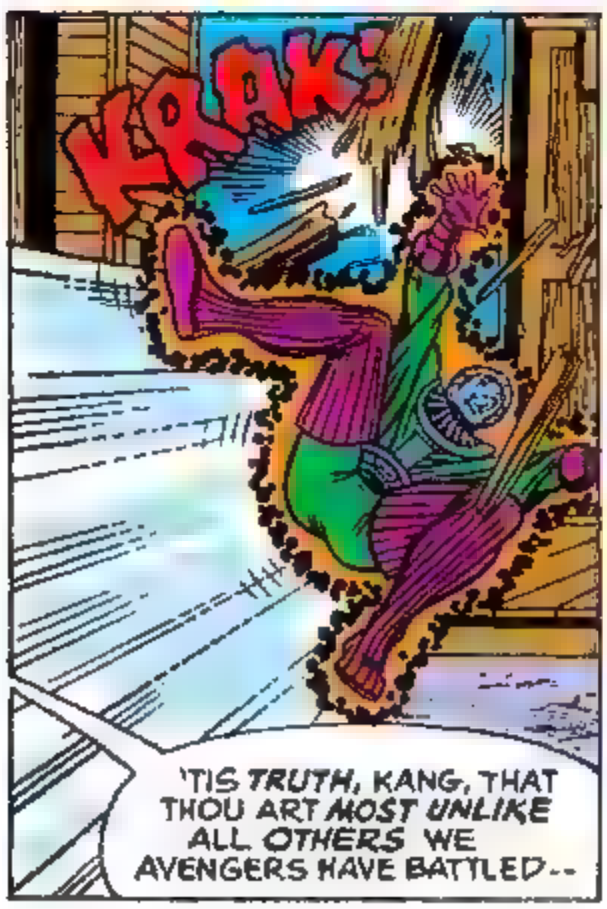
COMBATTING KANG IS SOLELY DESIGNED--

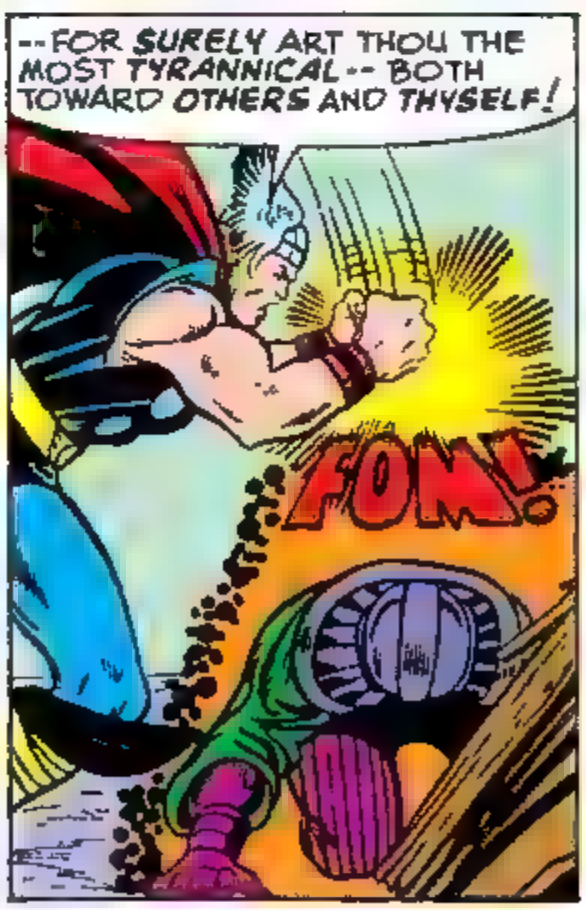
--FOR GODS!
BWOK!


BOY, THERE'S NO END TO WHAT KANG CAN COME UP WITH! NO WONDER HE NEVER QUITS!
GOOD THING WE CAN SAY THE SAME!
YOU OKAY, TWO-GUN?
UH... YES... YES, HAWKEYE. I'M FINE.

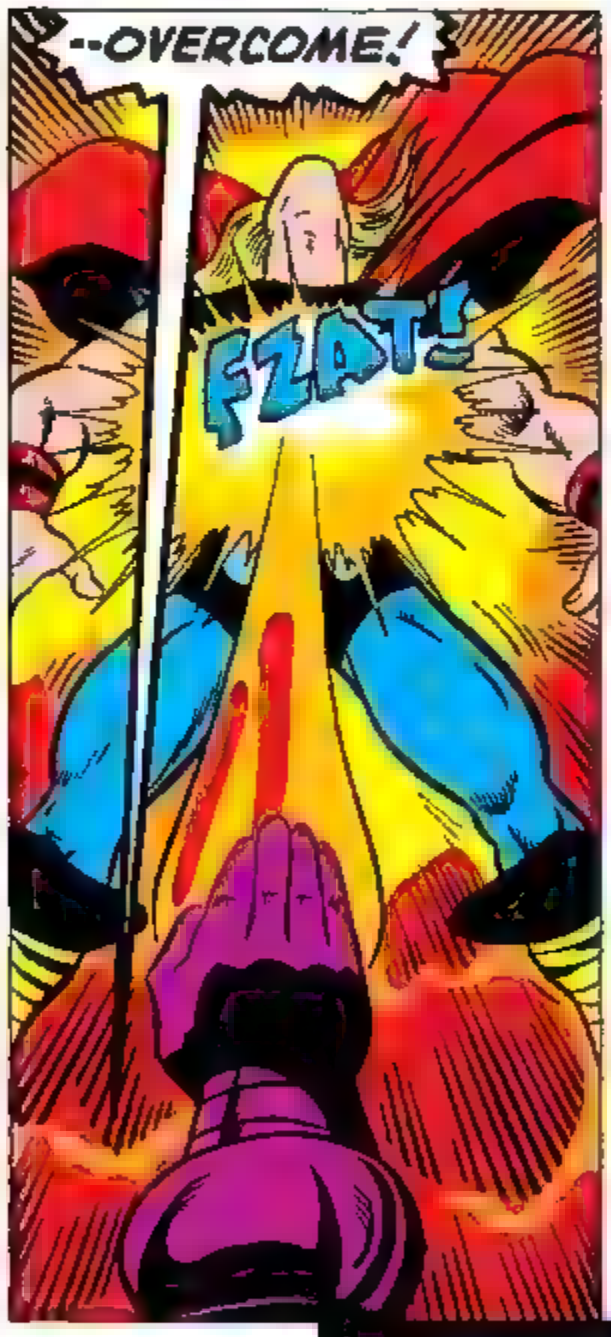
YOU SURE? YOU'RE NOT USED TO STUFF LIKE THIS.
I SAID I'M FINE, MISTER! DON'T YUH UNDERSTAND ENGLISH?
AH YES-- BUT A PRIESTESS UNDERSTANDS FAR MORE!
FAR MORE!

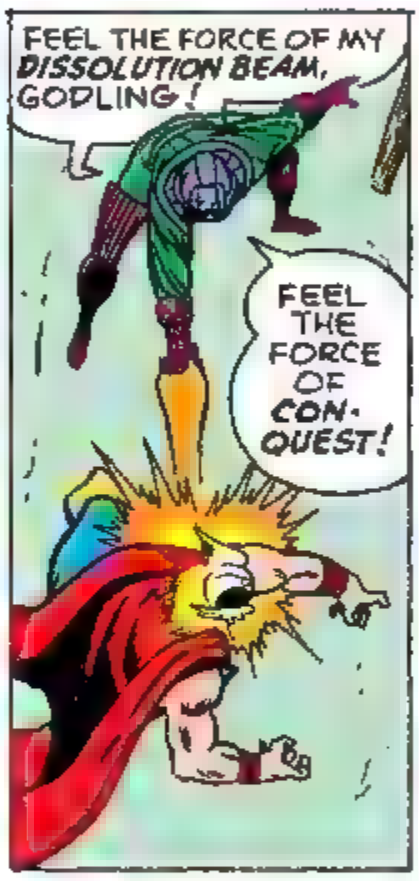

BE THAT AS IT MAY...
BA-ROOM!

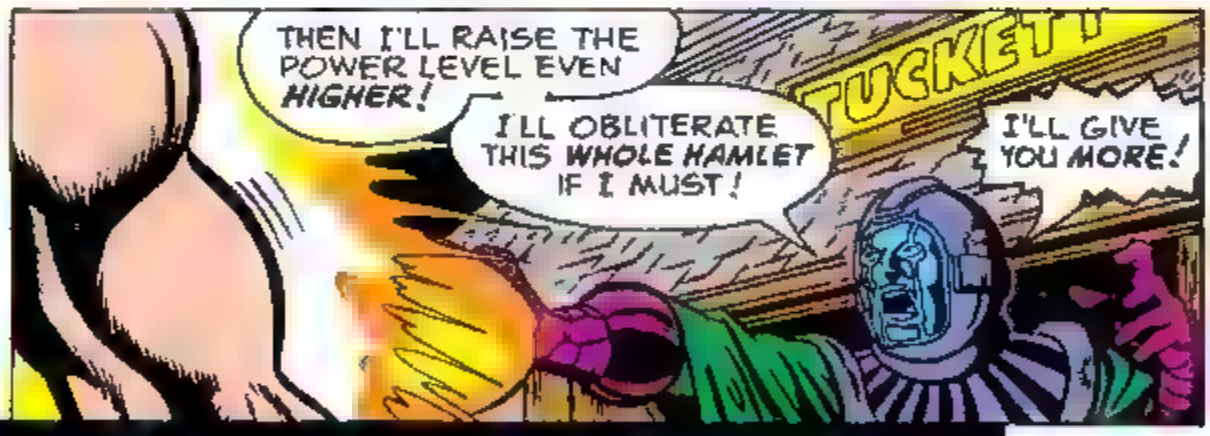

KRAK!
'TIS TRUTH, KANG, THAT THOU ART MOST UNLIKE ALL OTHERS WE AVENGERS HAVE BATTLED--

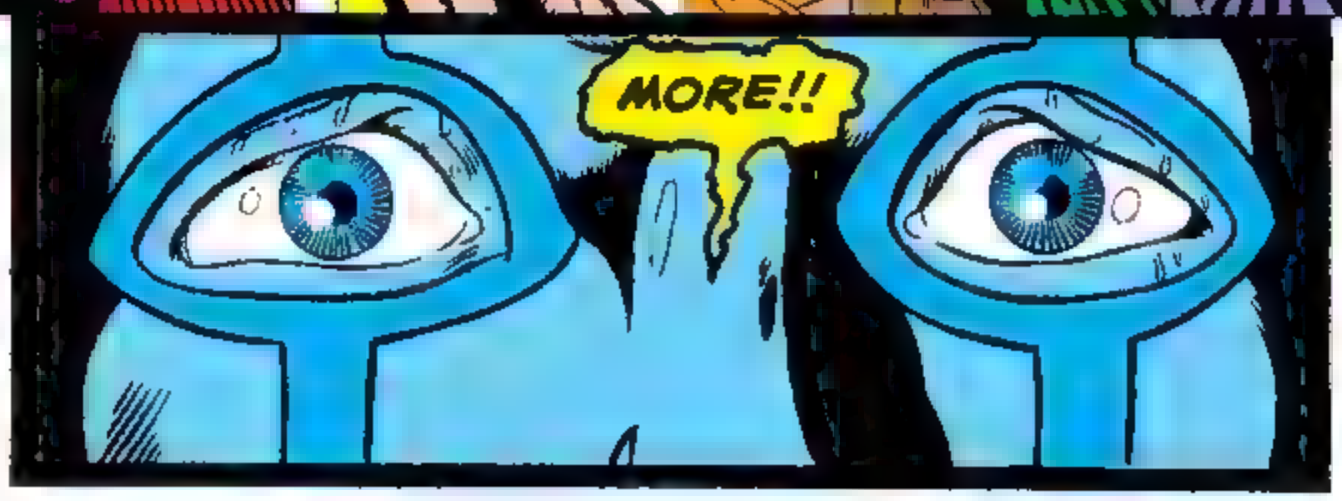

--FOR SURELY ART THOU THE MOST TYRANNICAL-- BOTH TOWARD OTHERS AND THYSELF!
FOM!

NE'ER DOST THOU RECOGNIZE AN ENDING TO THY LUSTS--







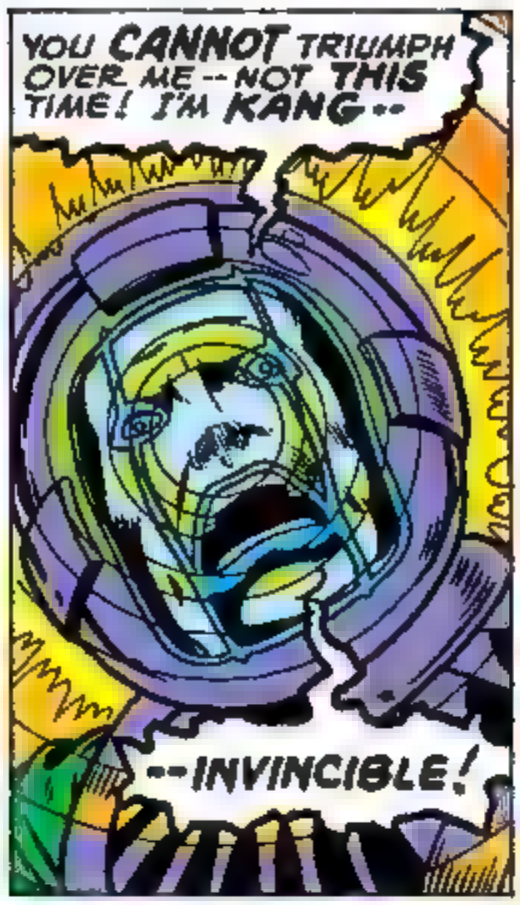


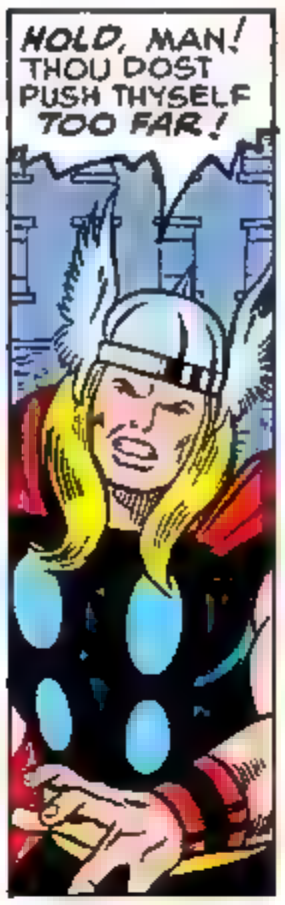
BUT IT SKITTERS THROUGH KANG, NOW, LIKE A SPIDER OF THE SPINE...

... A FEAR...

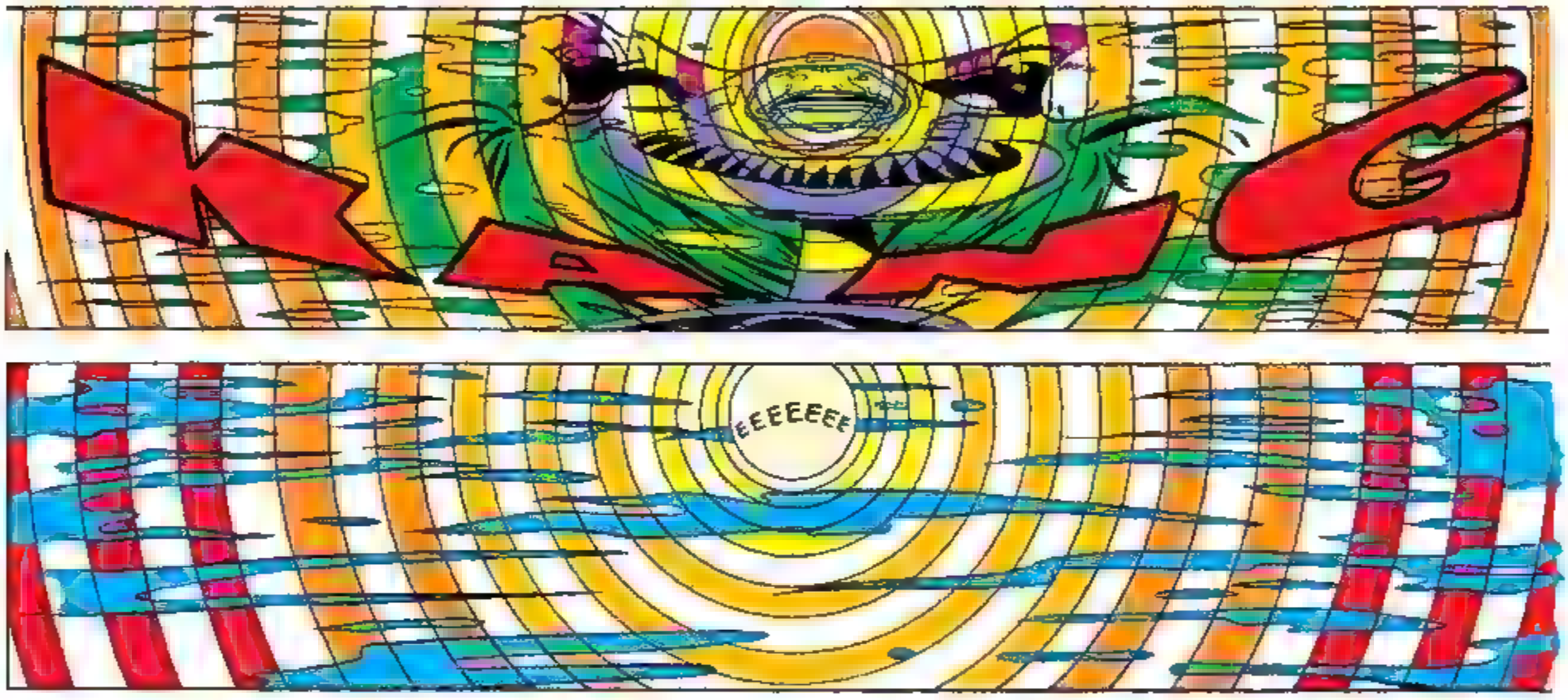
...SOME MIGHT SAY A WEAKNESS ...A WEAKNESS HE SWORE HE'D NEVER KNOW!

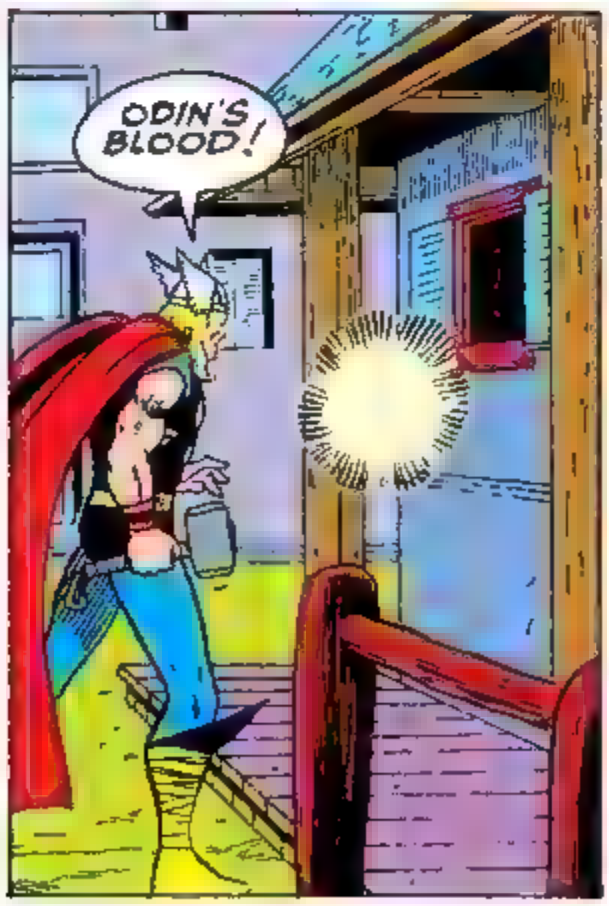
I'LL GIVE YOU MORE POWER!
YOU'LL FALL BEFORE ME, BLAST YOUR EYES!


YOU CANNOT TRIUMPH OVER ME -- NOT THIS TIME! I'M KANG--
--INVINCIBLE!


HOLD, MAN! THOU DOST PUSH THYSELF TOO FAR!

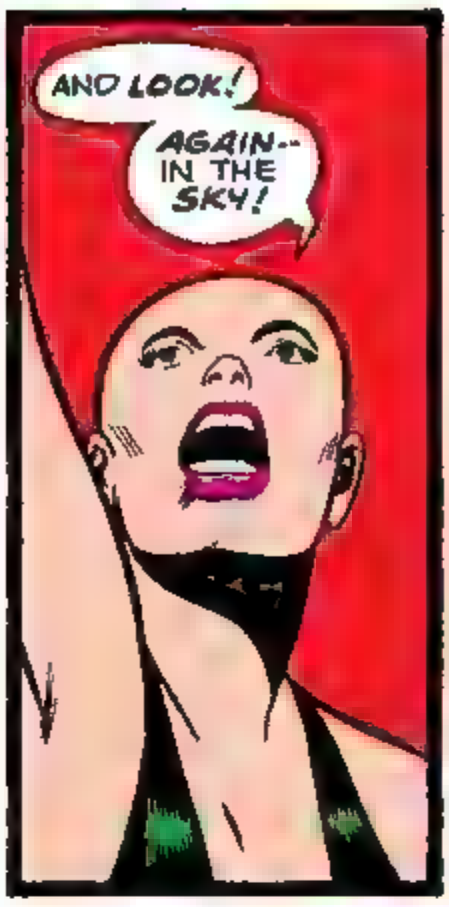
NO! MORE! KANG CONQUERS! CONQUERS! MORE! KANG! KANG!

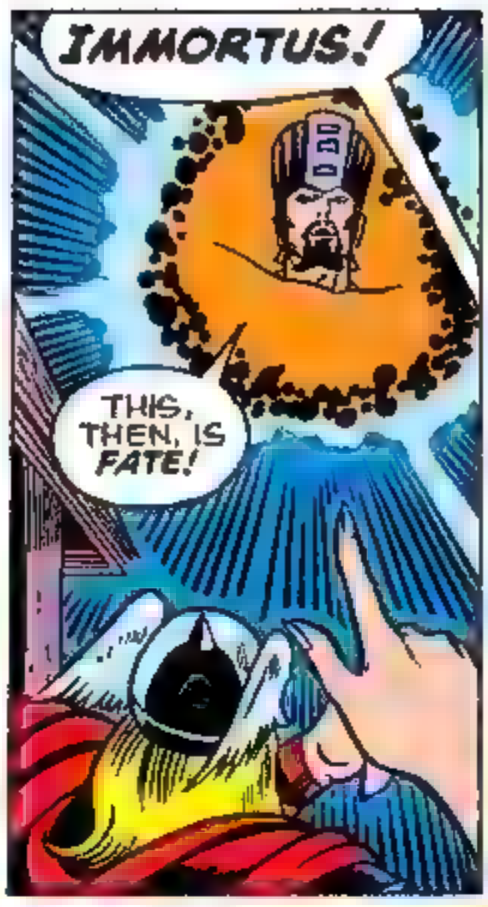

KANG
EEEEEEE


ODIN'S BLOOD!

HE DESTROYED HIMSELF! BUT IF I'VE LEARNED NAUGHT ELSE N MY IMMORTAL LIFE--
--SUCH IS THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR!
Eh?

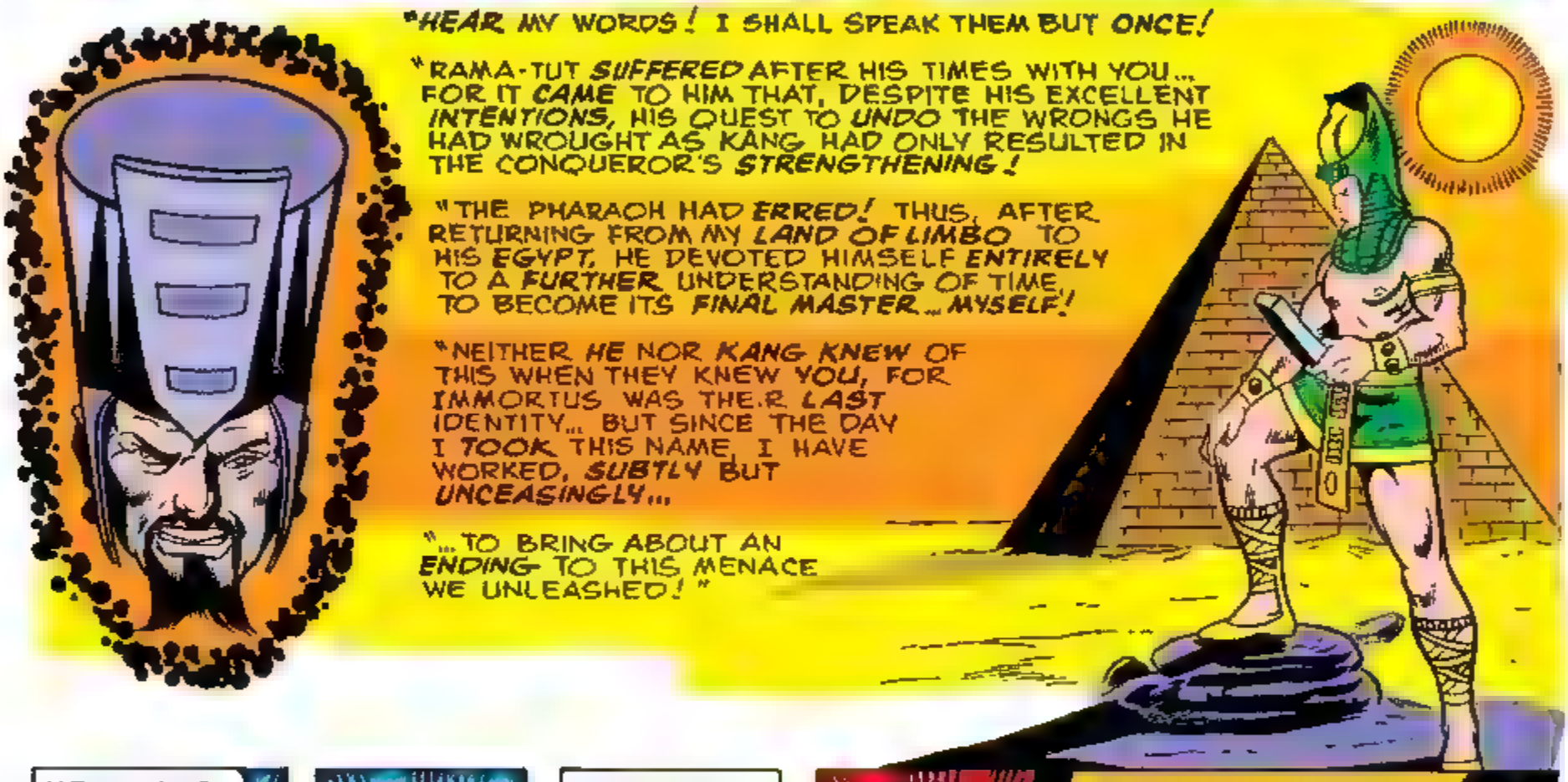
THE CITADEL! IT'S GONE!
WE'RE FREE!


AND LOOK!
AGAIN-- IN THE SKY!


IMMORTUS!
THIS, THEN, IS FATE!

KANG IS GONE-- HIS VERY ATOMS SPLIT AND SPREAD THROUGHOUT ALL TIME, NEVER AGAIN TO BE REJOINED...
...A FITTING END, AND ALL THE MORE SO, SINCE HE HIMSELF WAS ITS CAUSE!

BUT-- YOU ONCE TOLD THE AVENGERS THAT YOU WERE ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF KANG--LIKE PHARAOH RAMA-TUT!*
IF HE IS DESTROYED--!
*GS AVENGERS #3.


"HEAR MY WORDS! I SHALL SPEAK THEM BUT ONCE!
"RAMA-TUT SUFFERED AFTER HIS TIMES WITH YOU... FOR IT CAME TO HIM THAT, DESPITE HIS EXCELLENT INTENTIONS, HIS QUEST TO UNDO THE WRONGS HE HAD WROUGHT AS KANG HAD ONLY RESULTED IN THE CONQUEROR'S STRENGTHENING!
"THE PHARAOH HAD ERRED! THUS, AFTER RETURNING FROM MY LAND OF LIMBO TO HIS EGYPT, HE DEVOTED HIMSELF ENTIRELY TO A FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF TIME, TO BECOME ITS FINAL MASTER... MYSELF!
"NEITHER HE NOR KANG KNEW OF THIS WHEN THEY KNEW YOU, FOR IMMORTUS WAS THEIR LAST IDENTITY... BUT SINCE THE DAY I TOOK THIS NAME, I HAVE WORKED, SUBTLY BUT UNCEASINGLY...
"...TO BRING ABOUT AN ENDING TO THIS MENACE WE UNLEASHED!"

NOW, KANG NO LONGER EXISTS...
--AND RAMA-TUT SHALL NEVER COME INTO BEING!

NEITHER, TOO, SHALL IMMORTUS HAVE BEEN!

THE CIRCLE IS BROKEN!

WE ARE FREE!

TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA-- 1873. TODAY, AND FOREVER...
...THERE IS ONE LESS GOD.
NEXT: The CLAWS of the HELLCAT!

AVENGERS

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS®

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE-- TO MEET THE MOST FEARSOME NEW MEMBER OF ALL!

YOU WANTED HER--YOU'VE GOT HER!

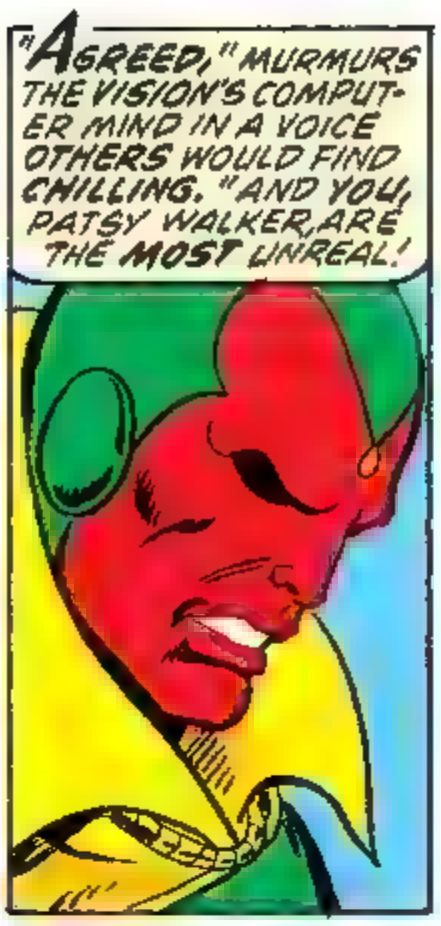
THE HELLCAT COMETH!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

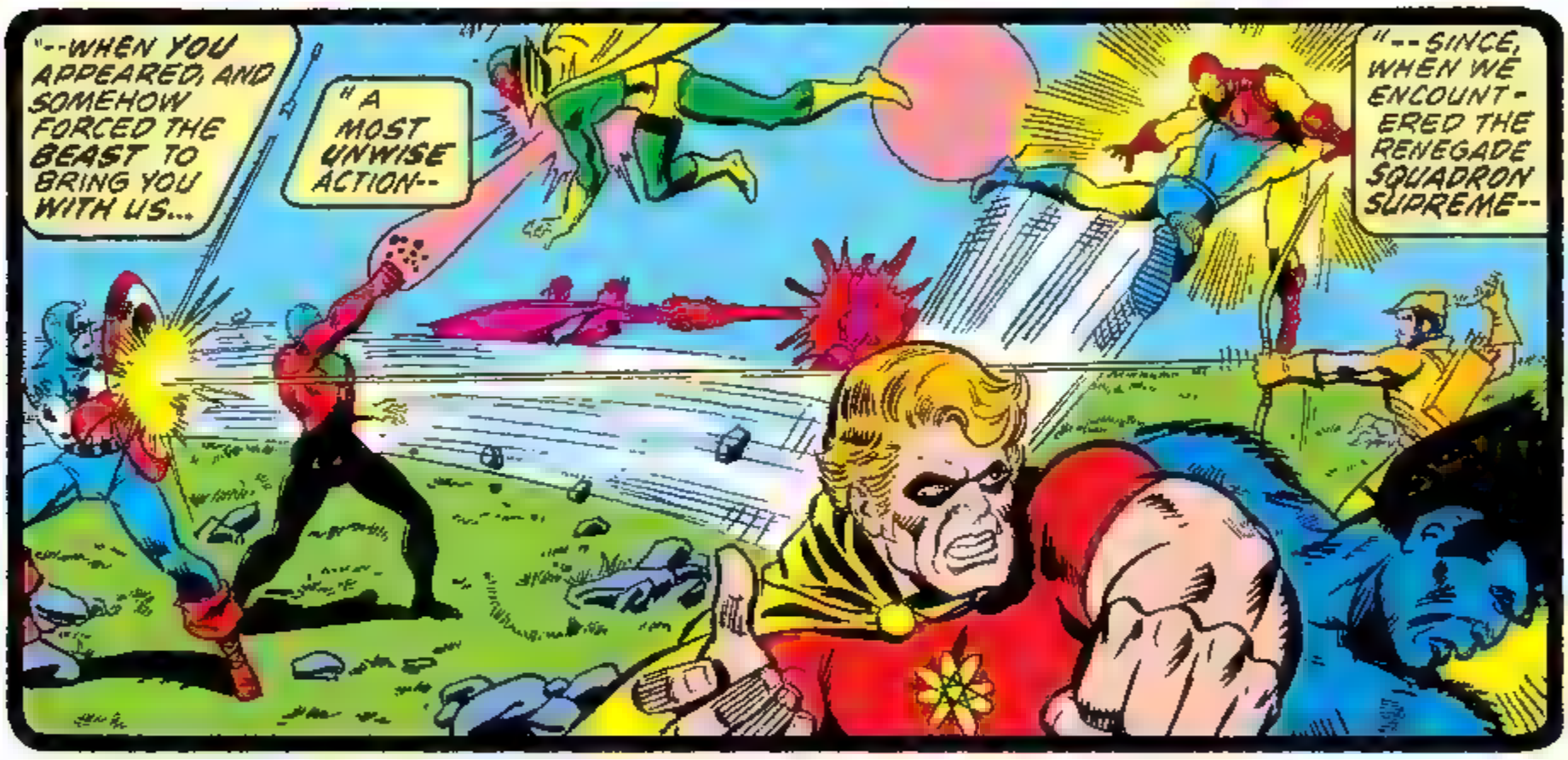
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!** ™

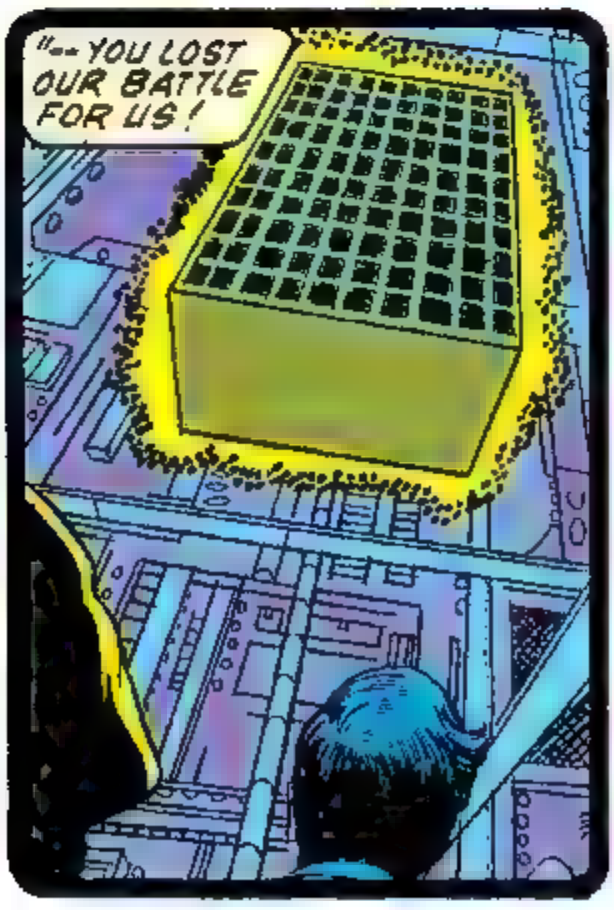
CLAWS!

IT--.T'S SO UNREAL! I MEAN-- IT'S ALL SO--
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, PATSY.
UNREAL!


"AGREED," MURMURS THE VISION'S COMPUTER MIND IN A VOICE OTHERS WOULD FIND CHILLING. "AND YOU, PATSY WALKER, ARE THE MOST UNREAL!

ONLY HOURS AGO, THE BEAST JOINED CAPTAIN AMERICA IN COMBAT AGAINST AN ARMY EMPLOYED BY BRAND
"WE DETERMINED TO INVESTIGATE--


"--WHEN YOU APPEARED, AND SOMEHOW FORCED THE BEAST TO BRING YOU WITH US...
"A MOST UNWISE ACTION--
"--SINCE, WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED THE RENEGADE SQUADRON SUPREME--


"--YOU LOST OUR BATTLE FOR US!

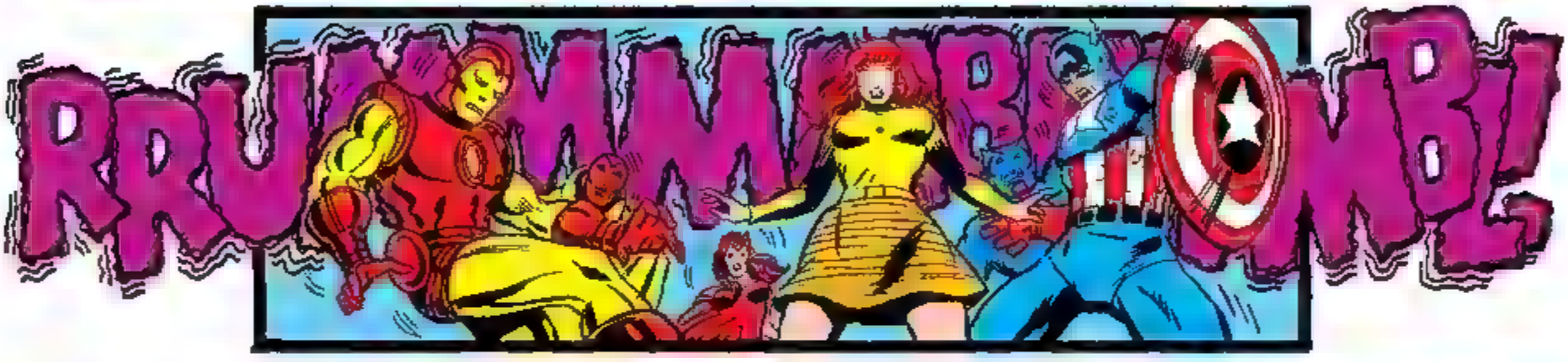
"YOUR EX-HUSBAND HEADS SECURITY HERE--
"--YOUR BRAIN SEEMS WIDELY SCATTERED--

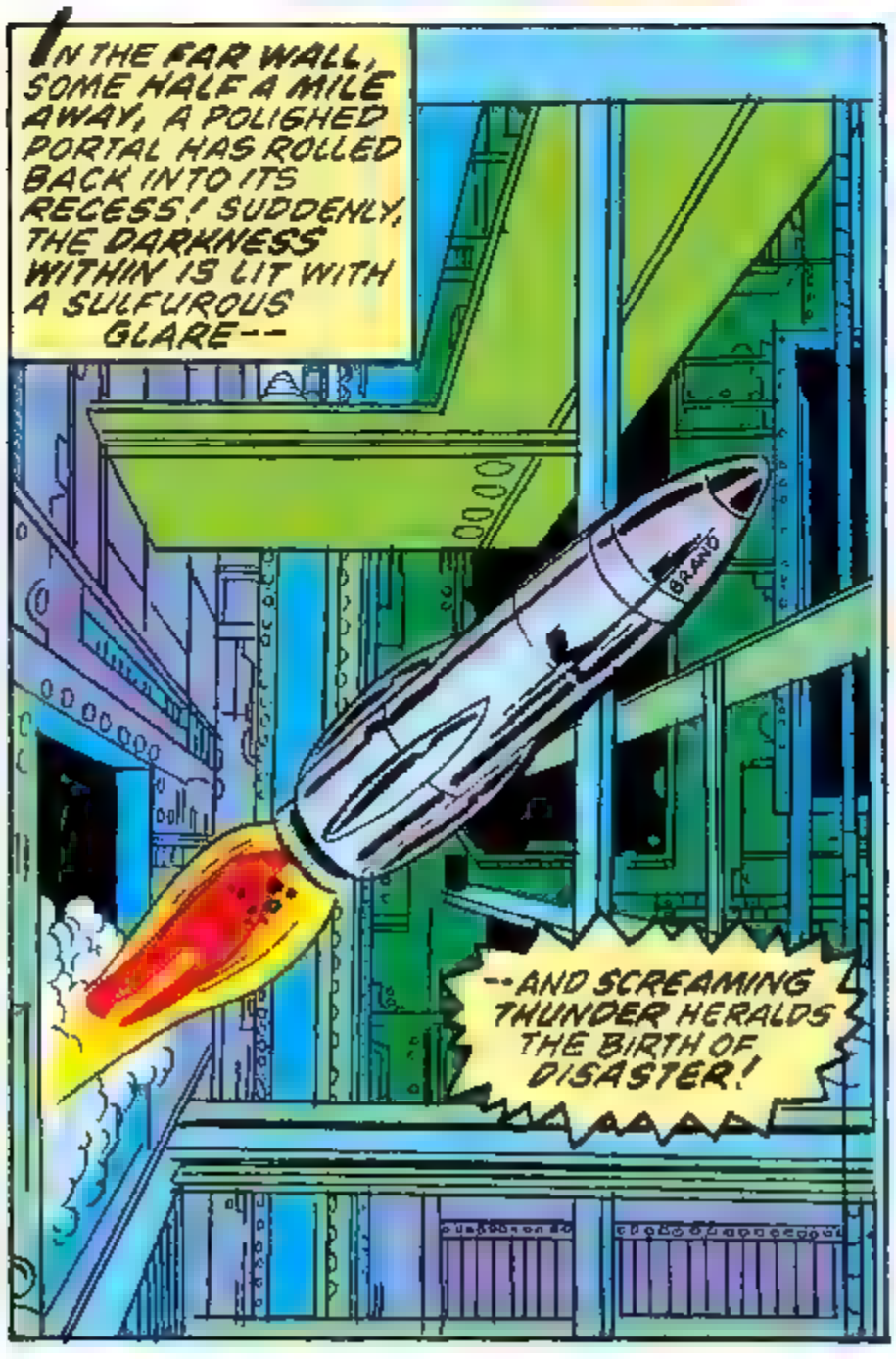
"--AND WE'RE FAR FROM OUT OF THE WOODS. AND YOU CALL THE SITUATION UNREAL!"
THIS WHOLE HANGAR IS NEW SINCE I WORKED HERE, CAP!
I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO HEAD!

DOWN THE HALL AND TO THE LEFT, I BELIEVE! HA! HA! HA!
MOTHER OF PEARL, THEY'RE ONTO US ALREADY!
BRAND DOESN'T MISS A TRICK!

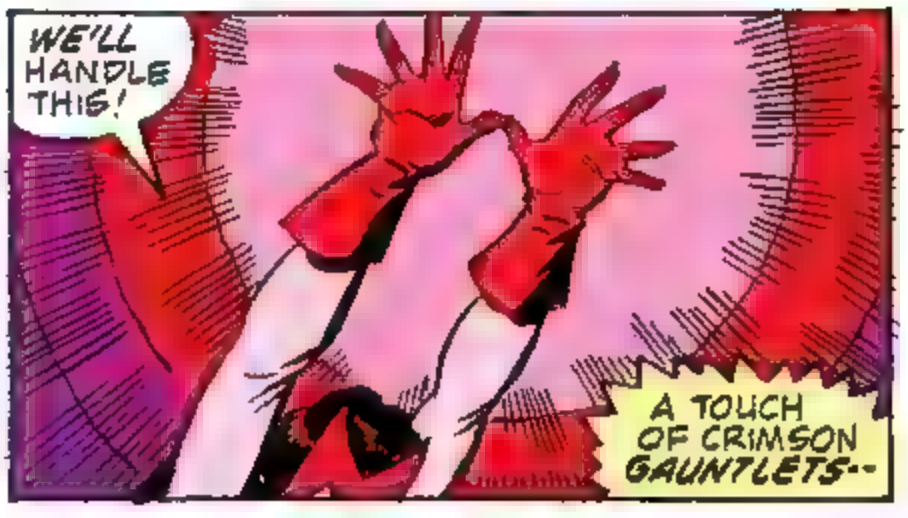
BUT THEN, STARK INTERNATIONAL WOULD BE JUST AS TOUGH TO INFILTRATE!
LOOKS LIKE WE FIGHT OUR WAY OUT, PEOPLE!

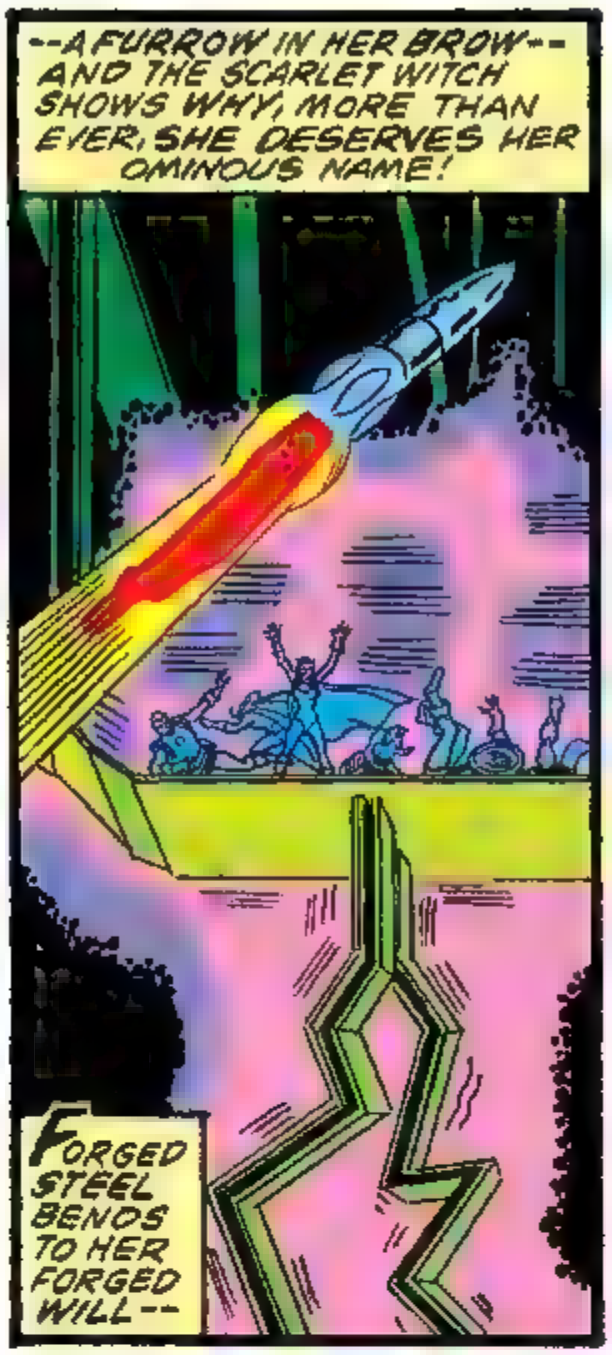
OH, NO, IRON MAN! WE'VE NO TIME FOR SUCH AMENITIES!
THROUGH THE BEST OR WORST OF FORTUNES, YOUR GUIDE HAS LED YOU INTO OUR... AH... CLASSIFIED WEAPONRY SECTION--SO WE SHALL SIMPLY--
--DESTROY YOU!


RRUMMMBBOMB!

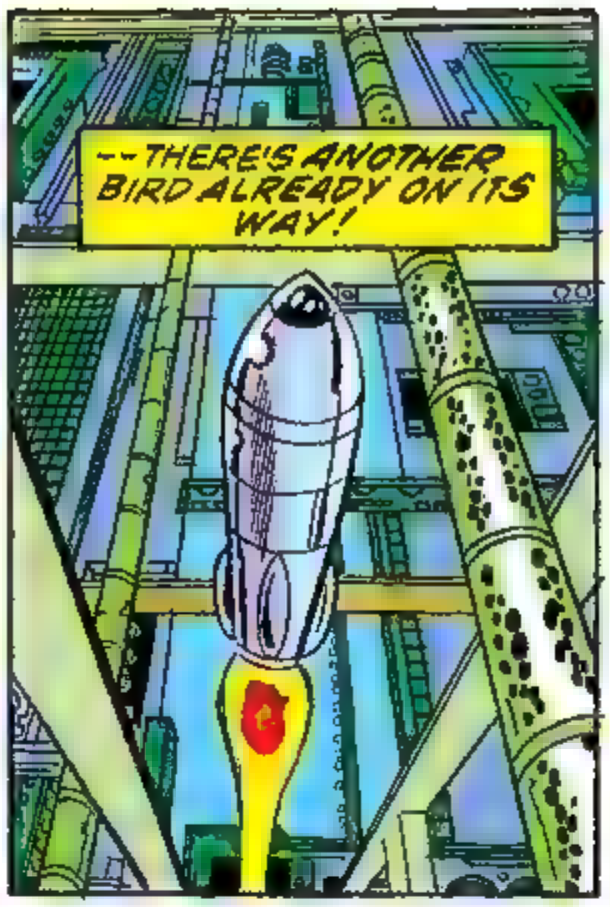

IN THE FAR WALL, SOME HALF A MILE AWAY, A POLISHED PORTAL HAS ROLLED BACK INTO ITS RECESS! SUDDENLY, THE DARKNESS WITHIN IS LIT WITH A SULFUROUS GLARE--
BRAND
--AND SCREAMING THUNDER HERALDS THE BIRTH OF DISASTER!

WANDA, THAT'S-- THAT'S A GUIDED MISSLE!
STAY CALM, PATSY! THE WORST THING YOU CAN DO IS LOSE YOUR HEAD!
YOU'RE WITH THE AVENGERS!

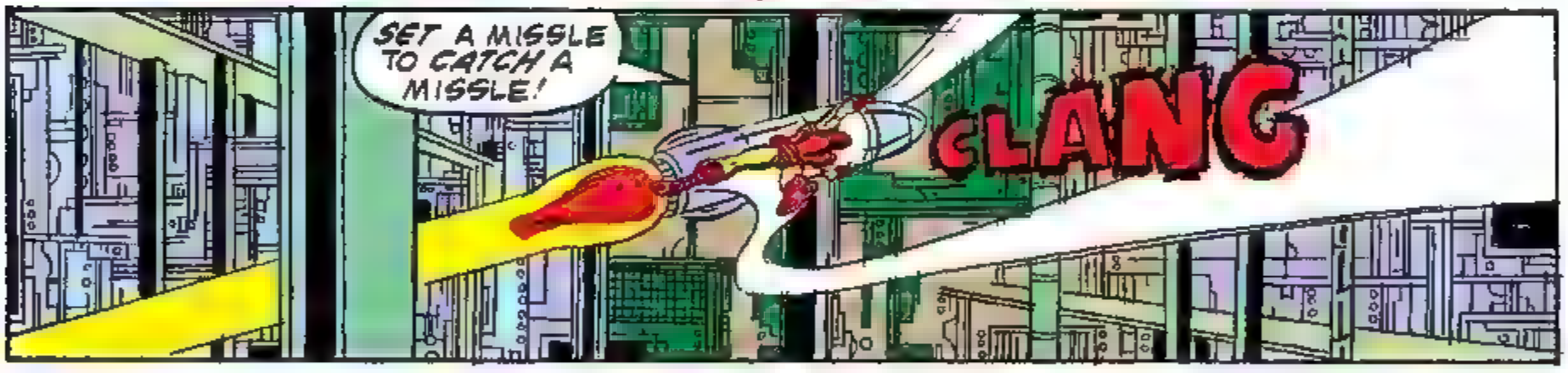

WE'LL HANDLE THIS!
A TOUCH OF CRIMSON GAUNTLETS--

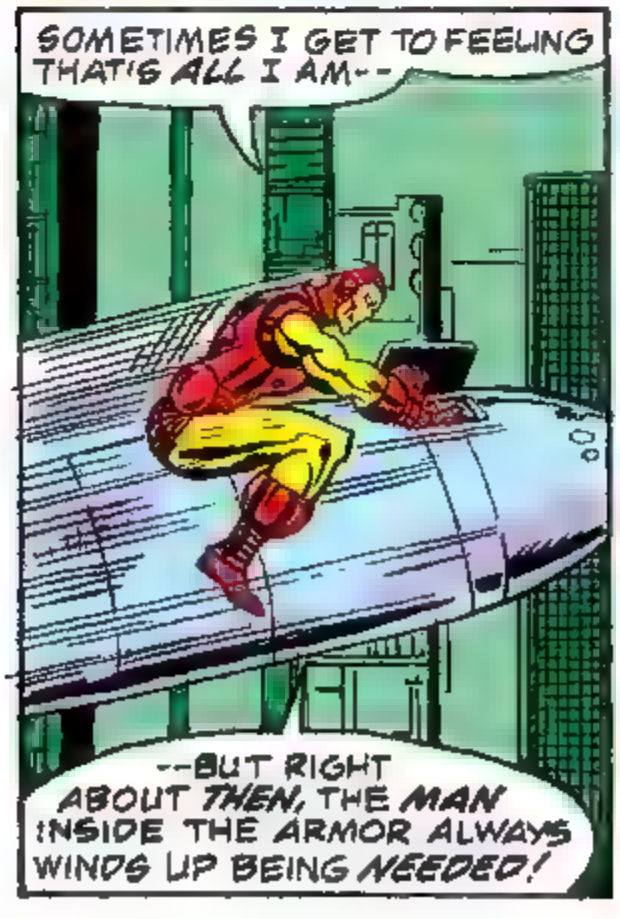

--A FURROW IN HER BROW--
AND THE SCARLET WITCH SHOWS WHY, MORE THAN EVER, SHE DESERVES HER OMINOUS NAME!
FORGED STEEL BENDS TO HER FORGED WILL--

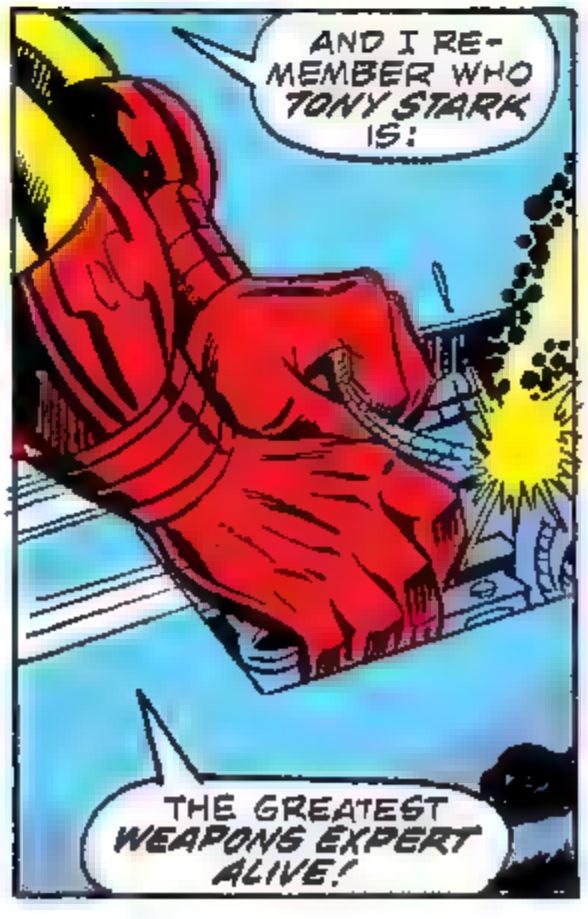
--BUT--

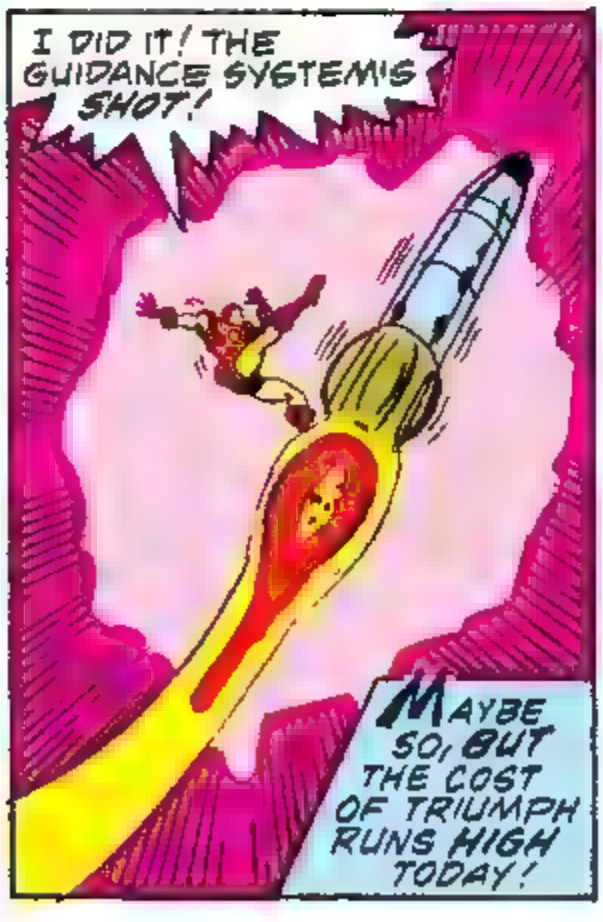

--THERE'S ANOTHER BIRD ALREADY ON ITS WAY!

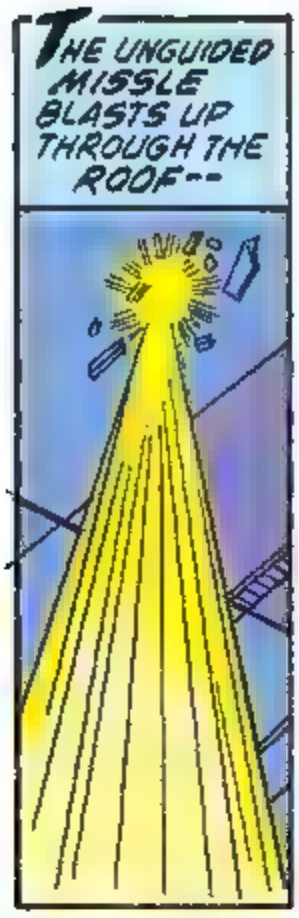
THIS ONE'S MINE, WANDA!


SET A MISSLE TO CATCH A MISSLE!
CLANG


SOMETIMES I GET TO FEELING THAT'S ALL I AM--
--BUT RIGHT ABOUT THEN, THE MAN INSIDE THE ARMOR ALWAYS WINDS UP BEING NEEDED!


AND I REMEMBER WHO TONY STARK IS:
THE GREATEST WEAPONS EXPERT ALIVE!

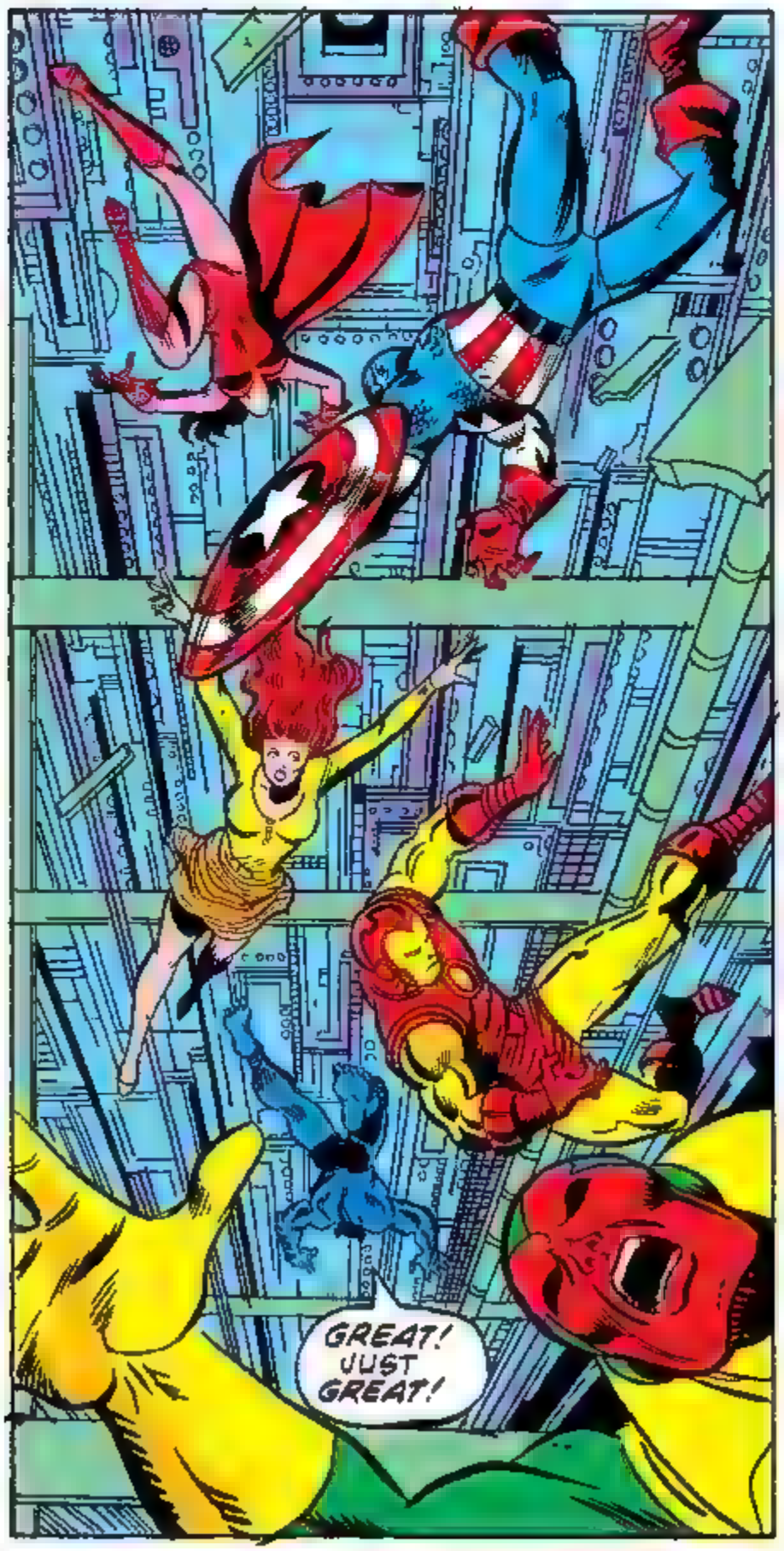

I DID IT! THE GUIDANCE SYSTEM'S SHOT!
MAYBE SO, BUT THE COST OF TRIUMPH RUNS HIGH TODAY!

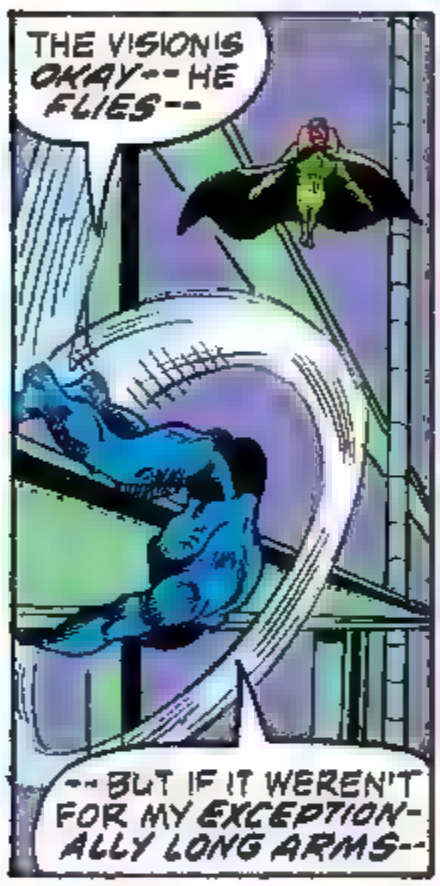

THE UNGUIDED MISSLE BLASTS UP THROUGH THE ROOF--

--WHILE THE WHIPLASH HURLS IRON MAN IN THE OTHER DIRECTION!

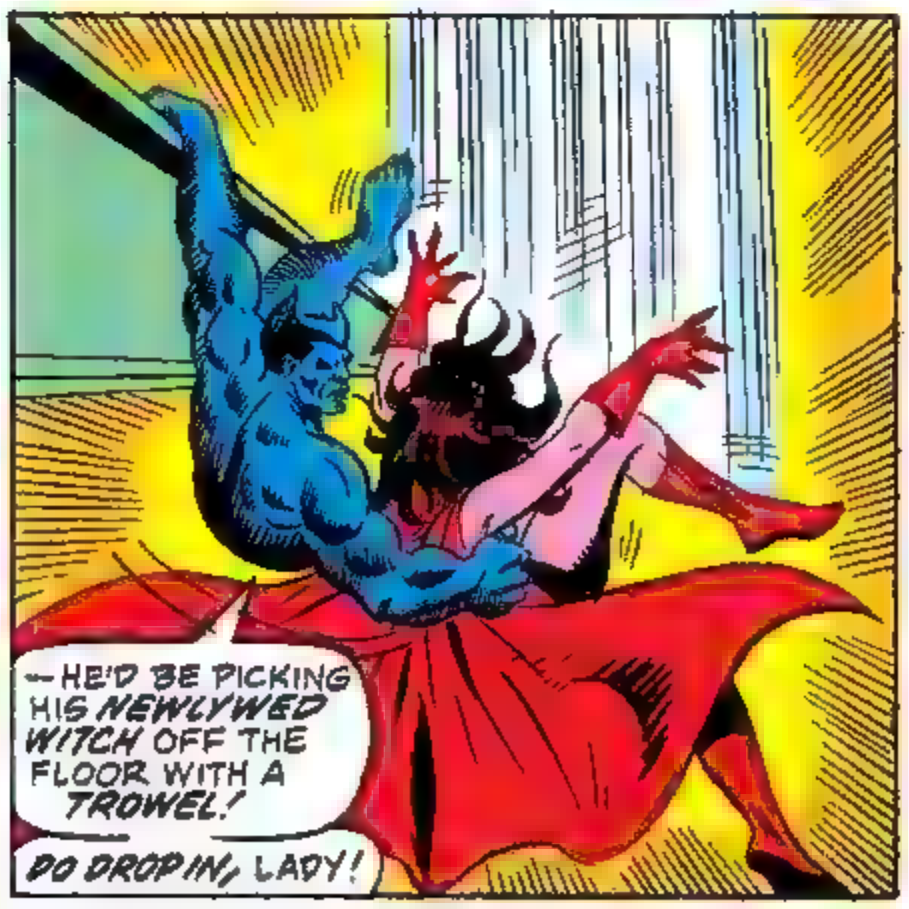
HE'S BEEN THROWN BACK AT US!
YOUR BOOT-JETS, AVENGER! USE YOUR--

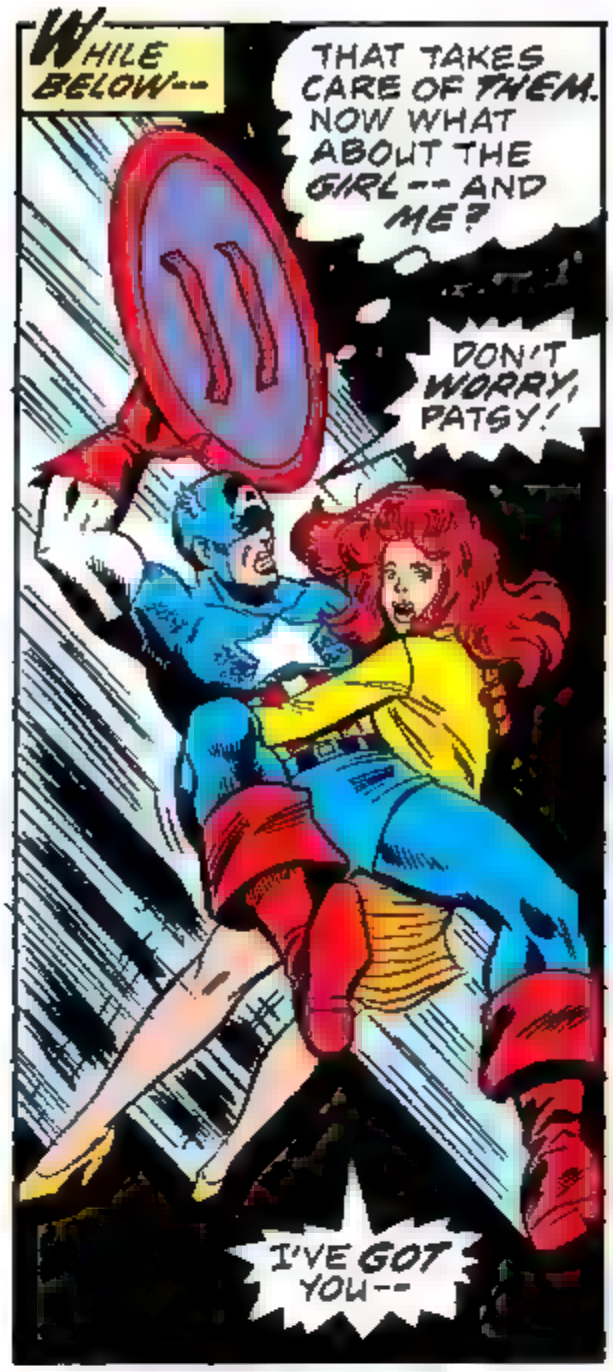
BWAM


GREAT! JUST GREAT!

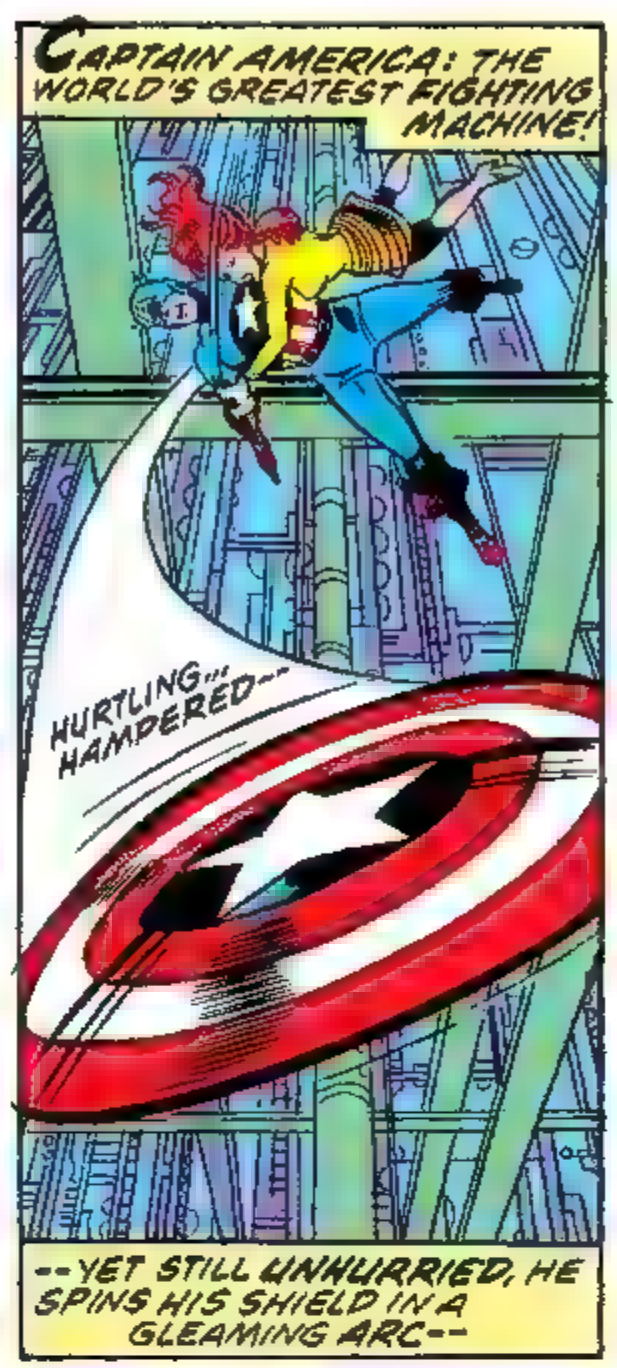

THE VISION IS OKAY--HE FLIES--
--BUT IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY EXCEPTIONALLY LONG ARMS--

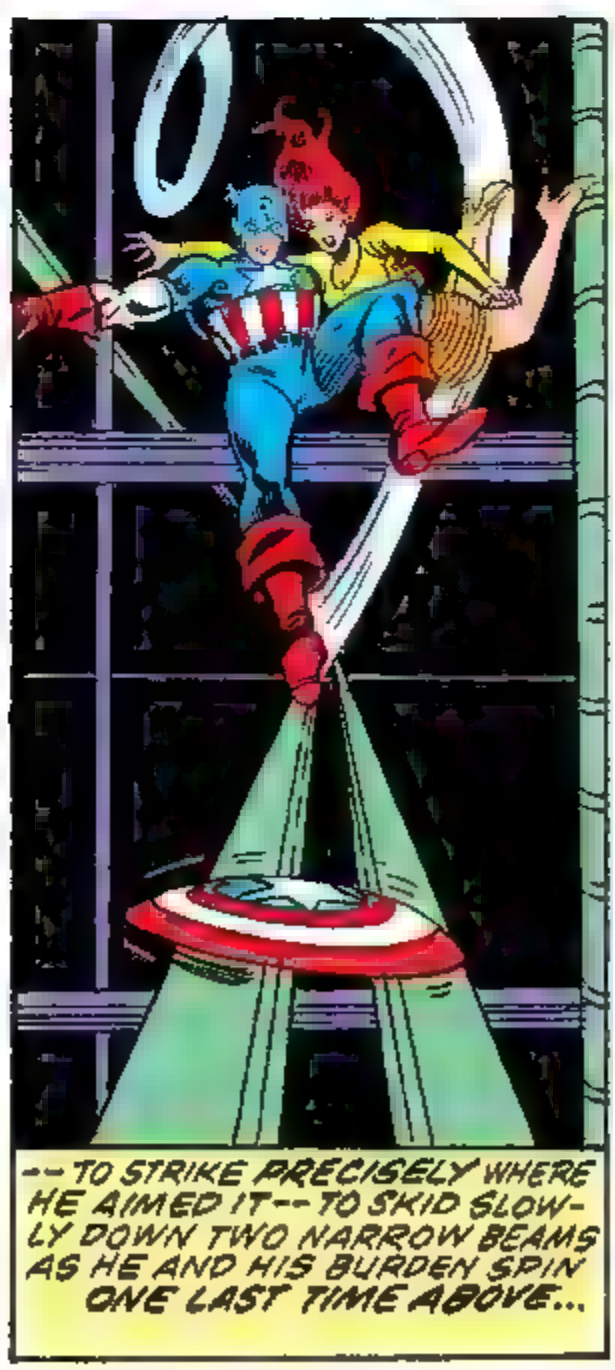
--AND MY MAGNETIC PERSONALITY--


--HE'D BE PICKING HIS NEWLYWED WITCH OFF THE FLOOR WITH A TROWEL!
DO DROP IN, LADY!

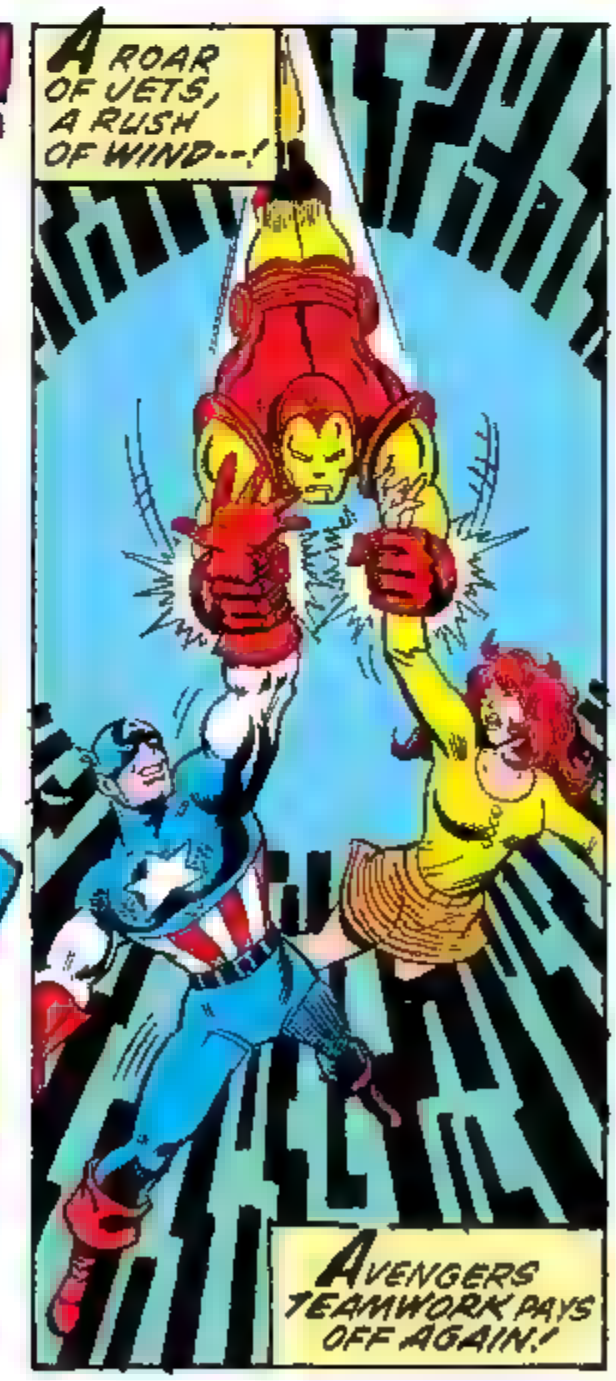

WHILE BELOW--
THAT TAKES CARE OF THEM. NOW WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL--AND ME?
DON'T WORRY, PATSY!
I'VE GOT YOU--

--AND I'VE GOT AN IDEA!

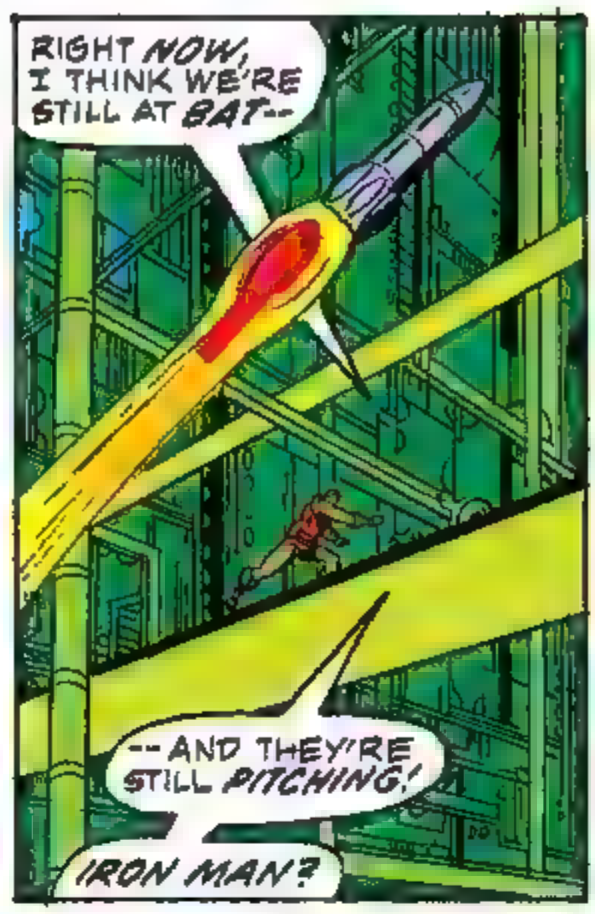

CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE WORLD'S GREATEST FIGHTING MACHINE!
HURTLING... HAMPERED--
--YET STILL UNHURRIED, HE SPINS HIS SHIELD IN A GLEAMING ARC--

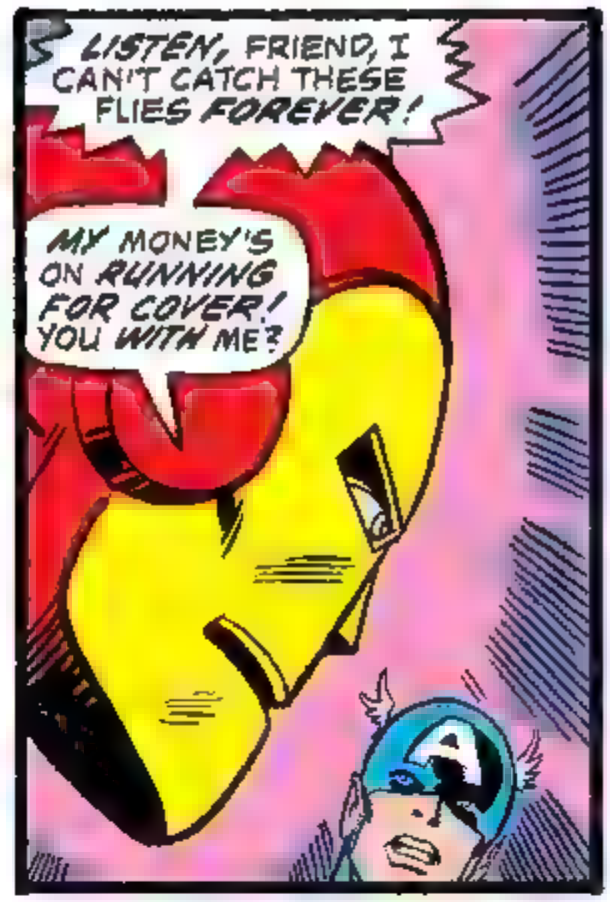

--TO STRIKE PRECISELY WHERE HE AIMED IT--TO SKID SLOWLY DOWN TWO NARROW BEAMS AS HE AND HIS BURDEN SPIN ONE LAST TIME ABOVE...

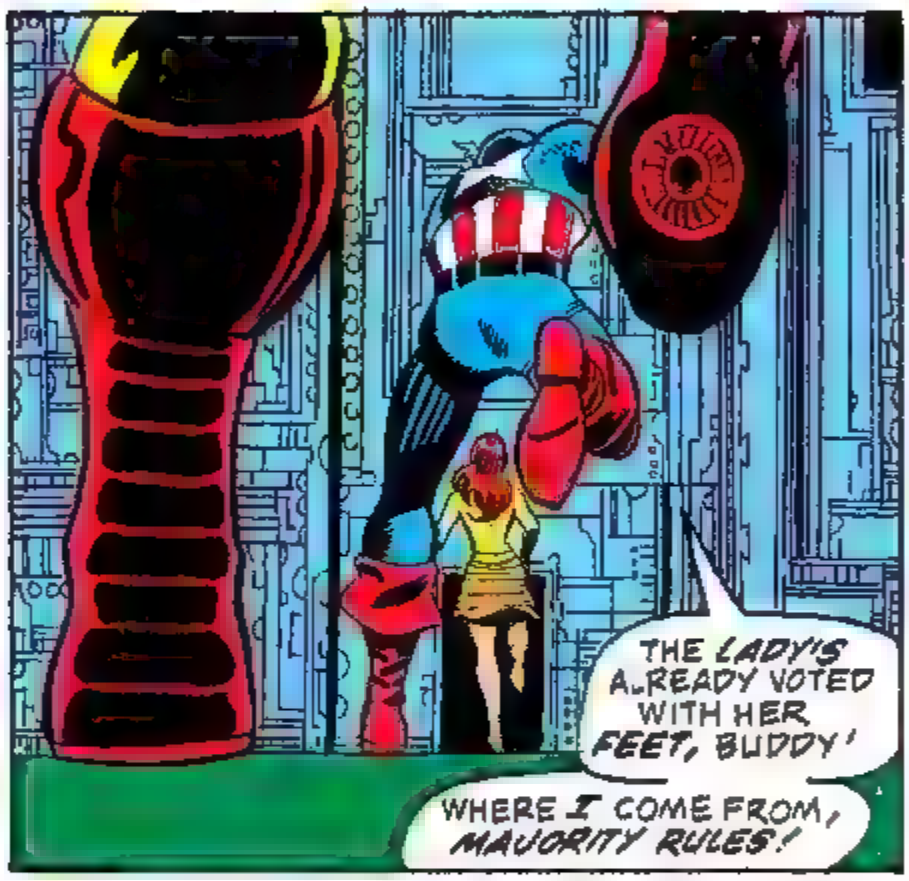
--IMPACT!
BLANG!
AND THEN...


A ROAR OF JETS, A RUSH OF WIND--!
AVENGERS TEAMWORK PAYS OFF AGAIN!

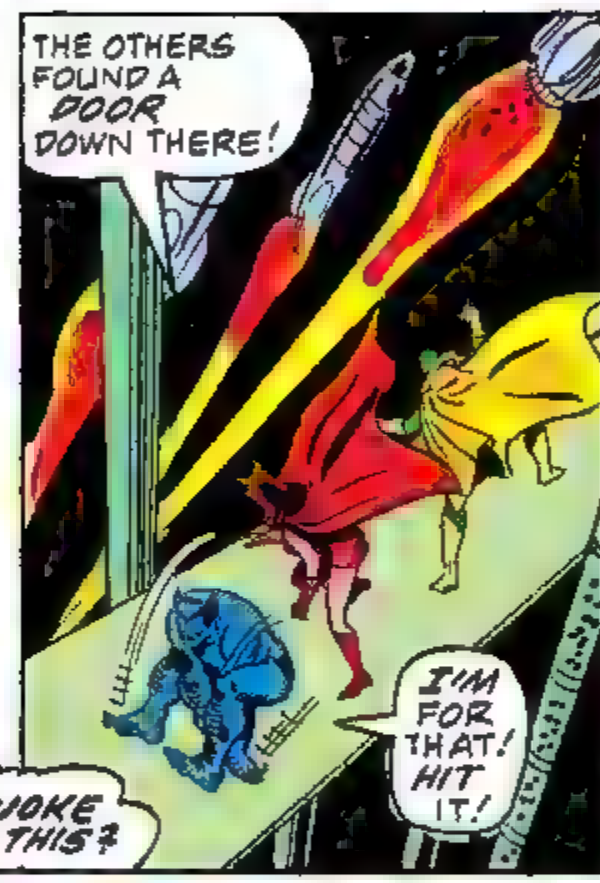
THAT'S ONE HECK OF A SHIELD YOU HAVE THERE, WINGHEAD...
...BUT WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF I'D STILL BEEN STUNNED?
OH, I'D HAVE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING!


RIGHT NOW, I THINK WE'RE STILL AT BAT--
--AND THEY'RE STILL PITCHING!
IRON MAN?

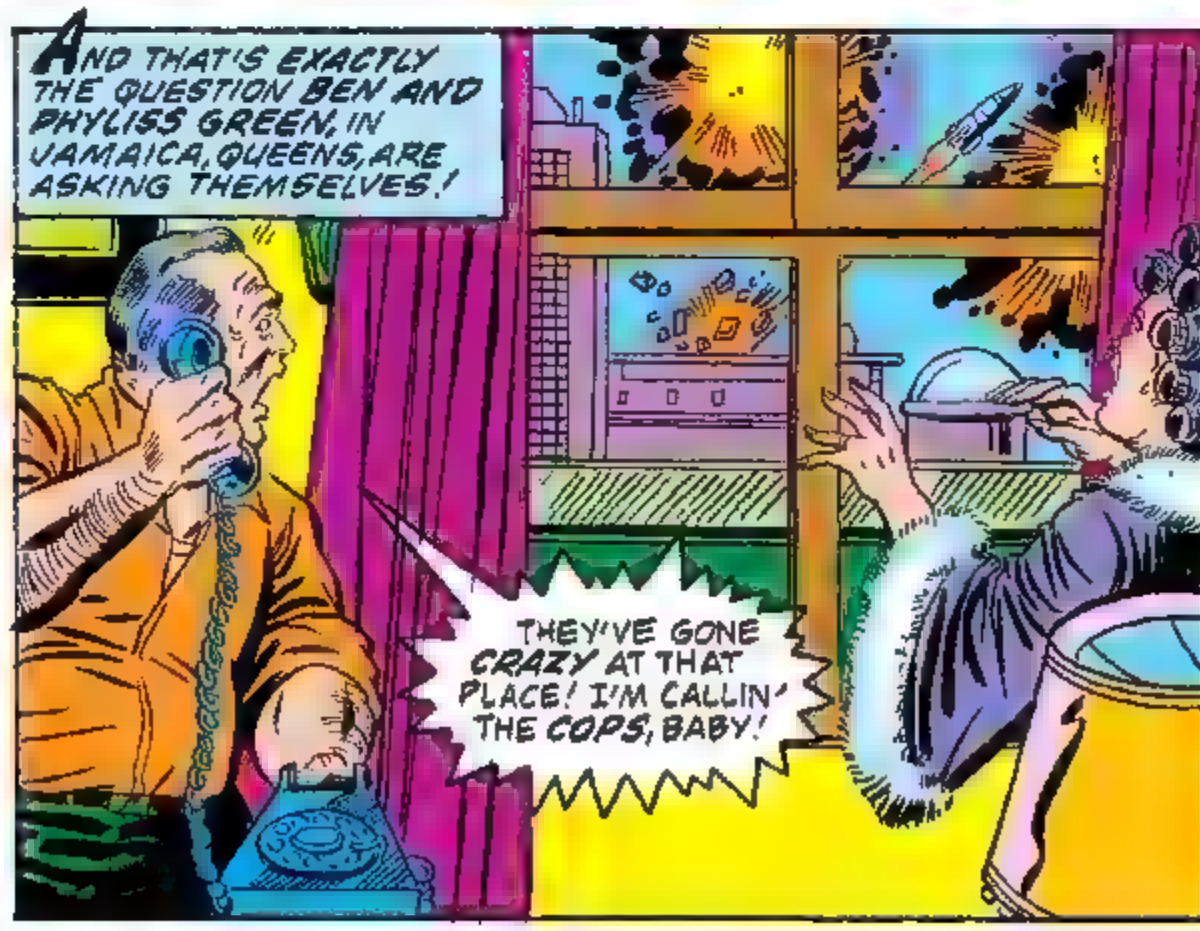

LISTEN, FRIEND, I CAN'T CATCH THESE FLIES FOREVER!
MY MONEY'S ON RUNNING FOR COVER! YOU WITH ME?


THE LADY'S ALREADY VOTED WITH HER FEET, BUDDY!
WHERE I COME FROM, MAJORITY RULES!

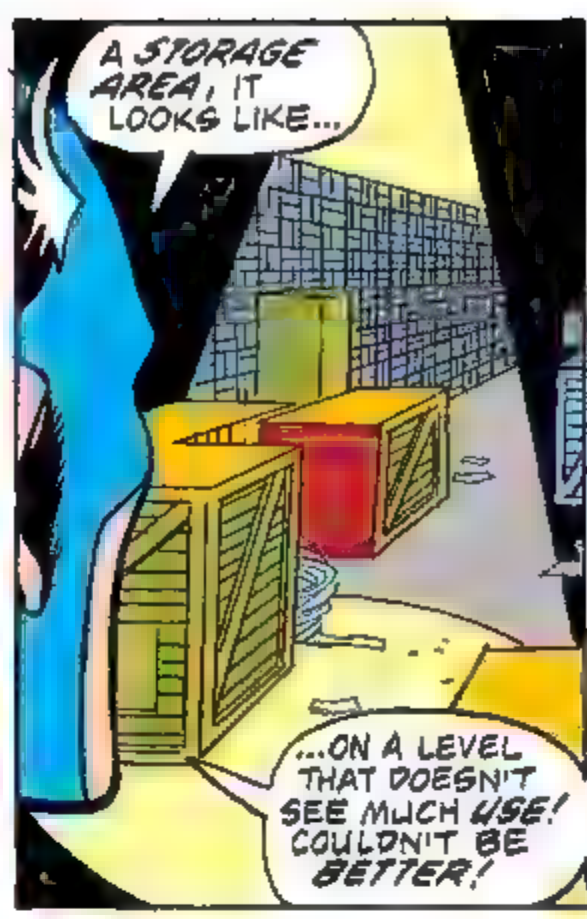
LISTEN TO THEM!
HOW CAN THEY VOKE AT A TIME LIKE THIS?


THE OTHERS FOUND A DOOR DOWN THERE!
I'M FOR THAT! HIT IT!

WOW! BRAND WAS BIG WHEN I WORKED HERE-- BEFORE ROXXON BOUGHT IT--
--BUT WHAT ARE THEY UP TO NOW??

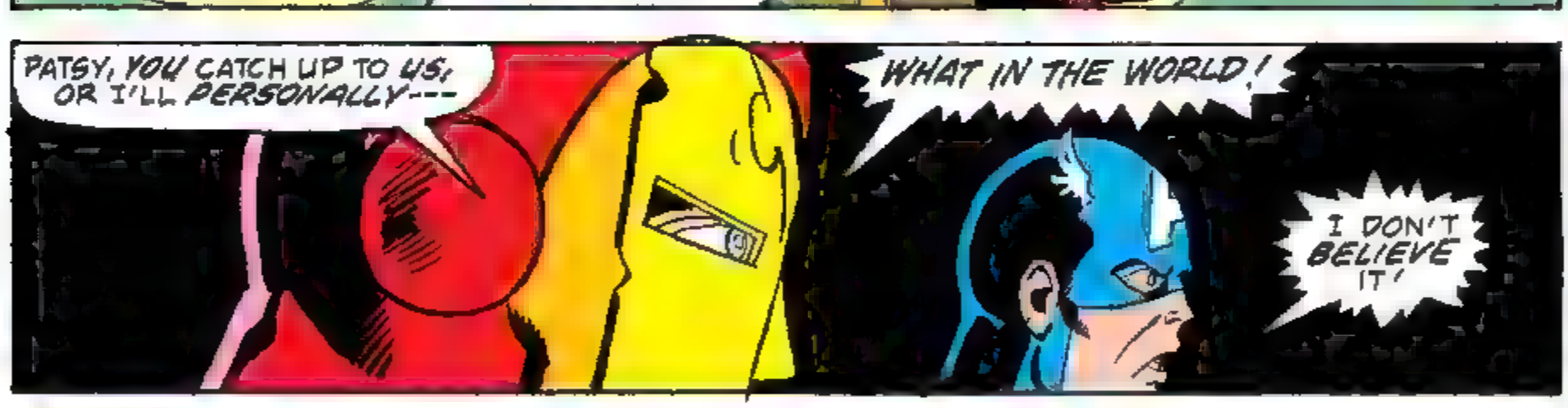

AND THAT'S EXACTLY THE QUESTION BEN AND PHYLISS GREEN, IN JAMAICA, QUEENS, ARE ASKING THEMSELVES!
THEY'VE GONE CRAZY AT THAT PLACE! I'M CALLIN' THE COPS, BABY!

THAT'S IT FOR BEN AND FOR PHYLISS THIS MONTH -- AND FOREVER -- BUT KEEP THAT FATEFUL PHONE CALL IN YOUR THOUGHTS--
--AS WE TURN BACK TO OUR STARS!
W-WHERE ARE WE?


A STORAGE AREA, IT LOOKS LIKE...
...ON A LEVEL THAT DOESN'T SEE MUCH USE! COULDN'T BE BETTER!

YOU KNOW, SHELL-HEAD...
LET'S KEEP MOVING SO THEY DON'T PIN US DOWN!

...NOBODY'S CALLED ME "WINGHEAD" LIKE YOU JUST DID SINCE I LEFT THE AVENGERS LAST YEAR!
I MISS IT! I MISS THIS GROUP!
THINGS HAVE BEEN STRANGE FOR YOU, EH? ME, TOO!
HEY, YOU GUYS! DON'T GO SO FAST!


PATSY, YOU CATCH UP TO US, OR I'LL PERSONALLY---
WHAT IN THE WORLD!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

THAT COSTUME! IT'S --
--THE CAT!

IT SEEMS TO BE THE REAL GOODS! I GUESS IT WOULD BE, IF IT'S IN THIS ASYLUM!
BUT HOW DID IT GET HERE?
BRAND CORP

BRAND AND ROXXON PROB'BLY BOUGHT IT, LIKE THEY BUY EVERYTHING ELSE!
YOU--KNEW THE CAT?

NO... I NEVER *MET* THE LADY, BUT I WAS IN CHICAGO ON *STARK BUSINESS* WHEN SHE FIRST *APPEARED* ONE RAINY NIGHT!

THE RUMOR IN *FINANCIAL CIRCLES* WAS THAT A CRACKPOT NAMED *DONAL-BAIN* DEVELOPED THE COSTUME, AND ITS *POWERS*, FOR HIS OWN *PURPOSES*...

...BUT THE WOMAN WHO *WORE* IT TURNED *AGAINST* HIM WHEN HIS PURPOSES TURNED OUT TO BE *ILLEGAL!*

IT WAS NEVER *PROVED.*

IN *ANY* EVENT, THE CAT ONLY SHOWED HER FACE *FOUR OR FIVE TIMES* BEFORE *DROPPING FROM SIGHT!**

IT WAS VERY *ODD!* SHE *ESTAB-LISHED A GOOD REPUTATION!***

* THE CAT #1-4 AND MARVEL TEAM-UP #8, TO BE PRECISE. -- MARV.

** WHAT ONLY THE LUCKY READERS OF G.S CREATURES (WEREWOLF) #1 KNOW IS THAT SHE WAS TRANSFORMED INTO *TIGRA THE WERE-WOMAN.* --MARV

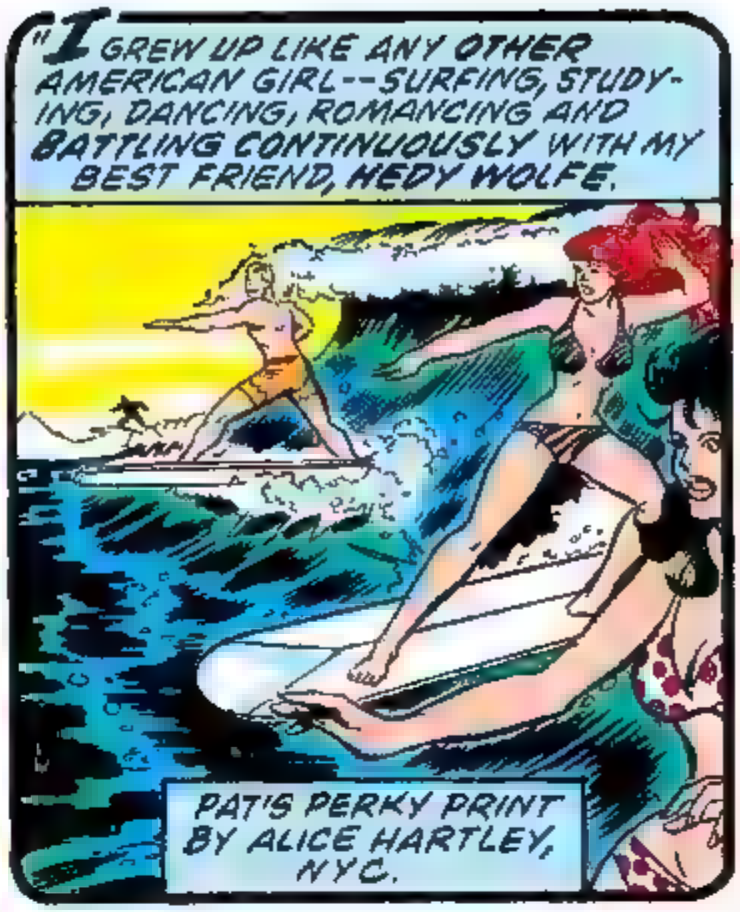
WHATEVER HAPPENED, SHE DIDN'T *CHICKEN OUT!* I READ ENOUGH ABOUT HER TO *KNOW THAT!*

YEAH...? SAY, *CAP--!*

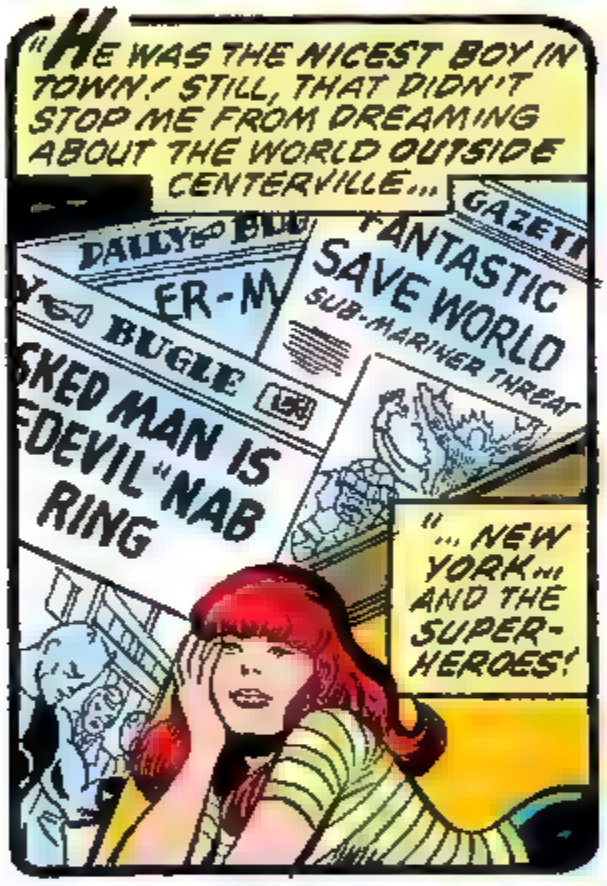
I'M WAY *AHEAD* OF YOU, SHELLHEAD! I'VE BEEN *EXAMINING* THE COSTUME-- IT'S IN *PERFECT CONDITION!*

MISS WALKER...

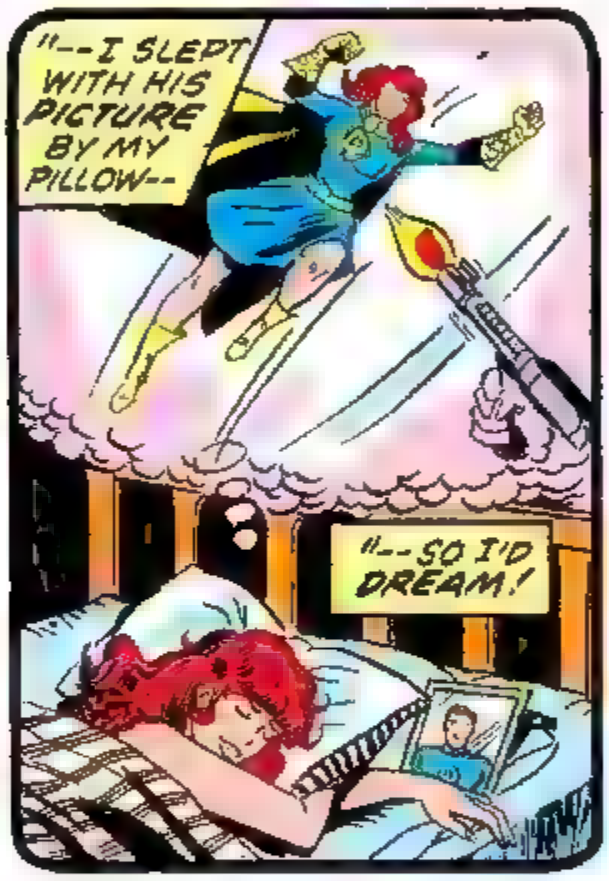
...COULD YOU PLAY... CAT?
TO CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SHOCKING QUESTION, HER ANSWER COMES BACK IMMEDIATELY...
...BUT TO PATSY...!


"I GREW UP LIKE ANY OTHER AMERICAN GIRL--SURFING, STUDYING, DANCING, ROMANCING AND BATTLING CONTINUOUSLY WITH MY BEST FRIEND, HEDY WOLFE.
PAT'S PERKY PRINT BY ALICE HARTLEY, NYC.

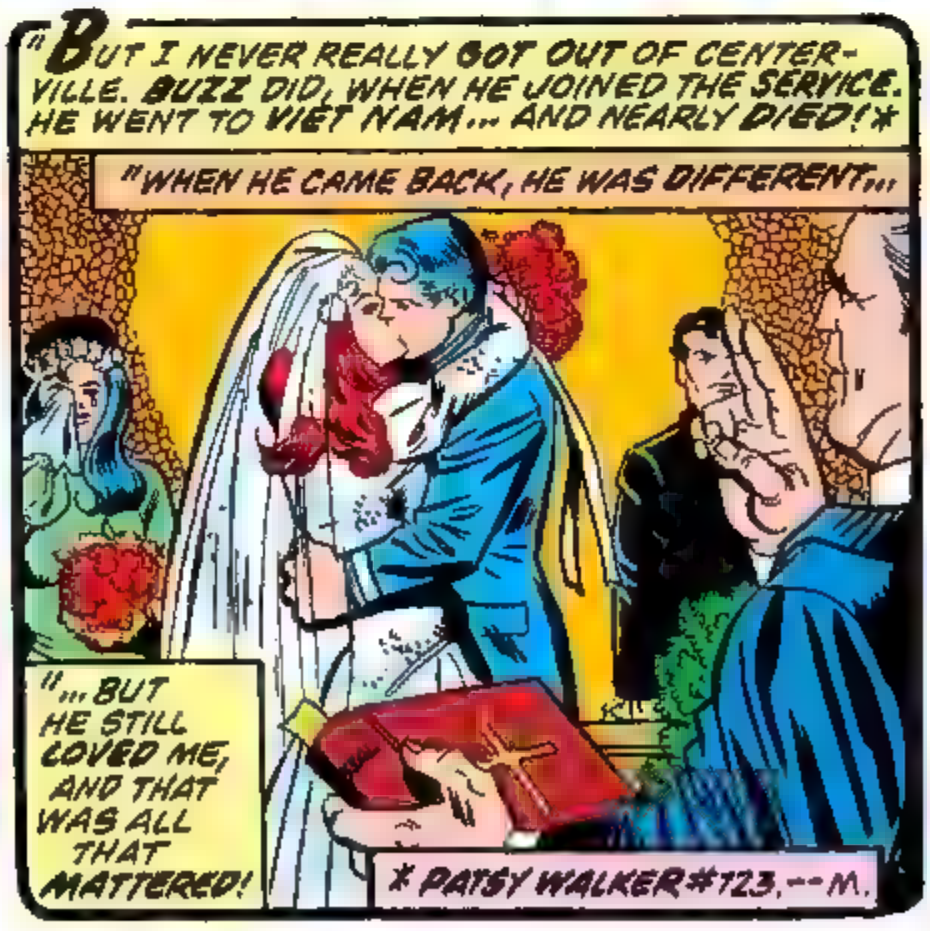
"I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAS MORE FUN AT THAT AGE: THE BATTLING OR ROMANCING--
"BUT I KNEW FROM THE START THAT BUZZ BAXTER WAS FOR ME!


"HE WAS THE NICEST BOY IN TOWN! STILL, THAT DIDN'T STOP ME FROM DREAMING ABOUT THE WORLD OUTSIDE CENTERVILLE...
DAILY BUGLE
FANTASTIC SAVE WORLD
SUB-MARINER THREAT
BUGLE
RING
"... NEW YORK... AND THE SUPER-HEROES!

"EACH NIGHT THERE WAS A NEW STORY ON THE NEWS. I COULDN'T HEAR ENOUGH ABOUT EACH NEW HERO!
"I HAD SUCH A CRUSH ON REED RICHARDS--


"--I SLEPT WITH HIS PICTURE BY MY PILLOW--
"--SO I'D DREAM!

"I WAS SO HAPPY THE DAY HE MARRIED SUE STORM! I DRAGGED HEDY OFF TO THE BAXTER BUILDING, AND WE MANAGED TO WORM OUR WAY RIGHT TO THE FRONT!*
*FF ANNUAL #3, SKEPTICS.--M.


"BUT I NEVER REALLY GOT OUT OF CENTERVILLE. BUZZ DID, WHEN HE JOINED THE SERVICE. HE WENT TO VIET NAM... AND NEARLY DIED!*
"WHEN HE CAME BACK, HE WAS DIFFERENT...
"... BUT HE STILL LOVED ME, AND THAT WAS ALL THAT MATTERED!
*PATSY WALKER #123.--M.

"LIFE WAS HARD THOSE FIRST YEARS--A LIEUTENANT'S SALARY DOESN'T ALLOW MANY LUXURIES. I DID MY BEST TO KEEP OUR QUARTERS NICE AND MAKE BUZZ HAPPY--

"--BUT HE WAS SO FRUSTRATED ALL THE TIME, WITH THE WAR WINDING DOWN AND ALL. HE'D COME HOME AND SMOULDER ALL NIGHT--
"--OR ELSE BLOW UP AT ME!

"I THOUGHT THINGS WOULD GET BETTER WHEN HE WAS PROMOTED AND SENT TO BRAND. *
"HE THOUGHT SO, TOO--
*AMAZING ADVENTURES #13. --M.

"--SINCE BRAND, THO' CIVILIAN-CONTROLLED--
"--HAS THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS MAJOR CLIENT.

"BUZZ WOULD BE SEEN THERE, AND PROMOTED FASTER! ONLY... A MYSTERIOUS BEAST WAS RAVAGING THE CORPORATION, AND BUZZ COULDN'T CATCH HIM!
"HE BEGAN TO IGNORE ME FOR HIS WORK--HIS INVESTIGATION OF HANK McCOY...!

"THEN, ONE MORNING, I HEARD A KNOCK ON OUR DOOR, AND OPENED IT...
WHAT IN THE WORLD? *
*AA#15 --M

"THE BEAST WAS WOUNDED, AND HAD PASSED OUT. I NURSED HIM, NOT DARING TO LEAVE HIS SIDE TO CALL BUZZ. HIS WOUND WAS HEALING ITSELF--
--BUT HE WAS STILL IN SHOCK--

"--WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN--
WHY... WHY DID I MUTATE... HANK McCOY... BECOME REAL BEAST...?

"HE BABBLED EVERYTHING IN HIS DELIRIUM, AND AS I SAT LISTENING--

"--I CAME TO SEE WHAT I WOULD DO ABOUT IT!

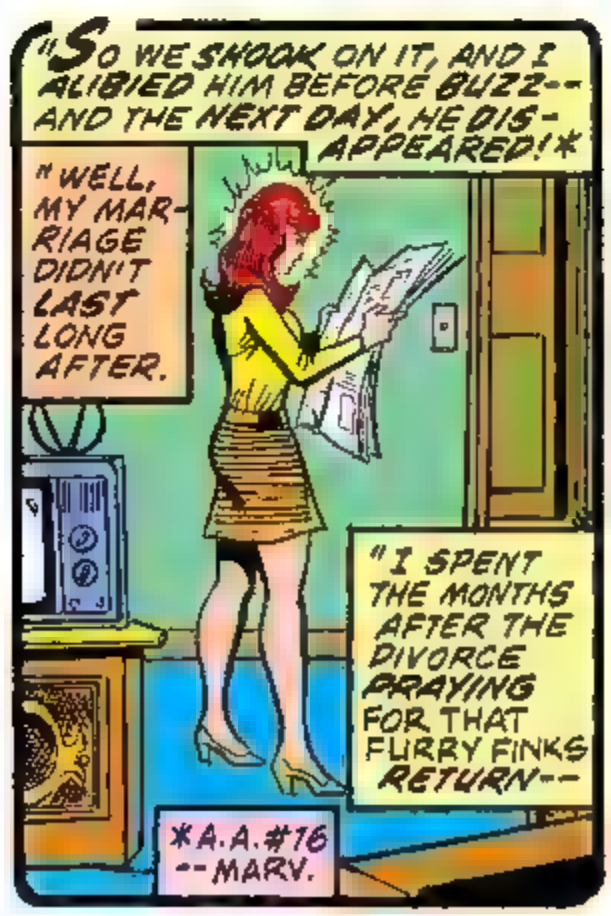
"I TOLD HIM WHEN I WOKE UP
WHA--? HOW'D I GET HERE?
HAVE TO ESCAPE --RUN!
YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING ALL YOUR LIFE, HAVEN'T YOU--

--HANK McCOY?
HUH?!
DON'T WORRY. I'LL KEEP YOUR SECRET--EVEN FROM MY HUSBAND--

--IF YOU'LL MAKE ME--A SUPER-HEROINE!
A WHAT--? LADY, ARE YOU NUTS?
MAYBE... MAYBE SO...

...BUT YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO CALL THE KETTLE BLACK!
YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE, BEAST--
--AND I'M NOT ASKING FOR A MIRACLE!

JUST A COSTUME WITH SOME POWER, OR A SERUM, OR SOMETHING! I KNOW ALL YOU HEROES ARE FRIENDS! ASK REED RICHARDS!
YOU ARE NUTS --BUT YOU'RE ALSO IN CHARGE!!

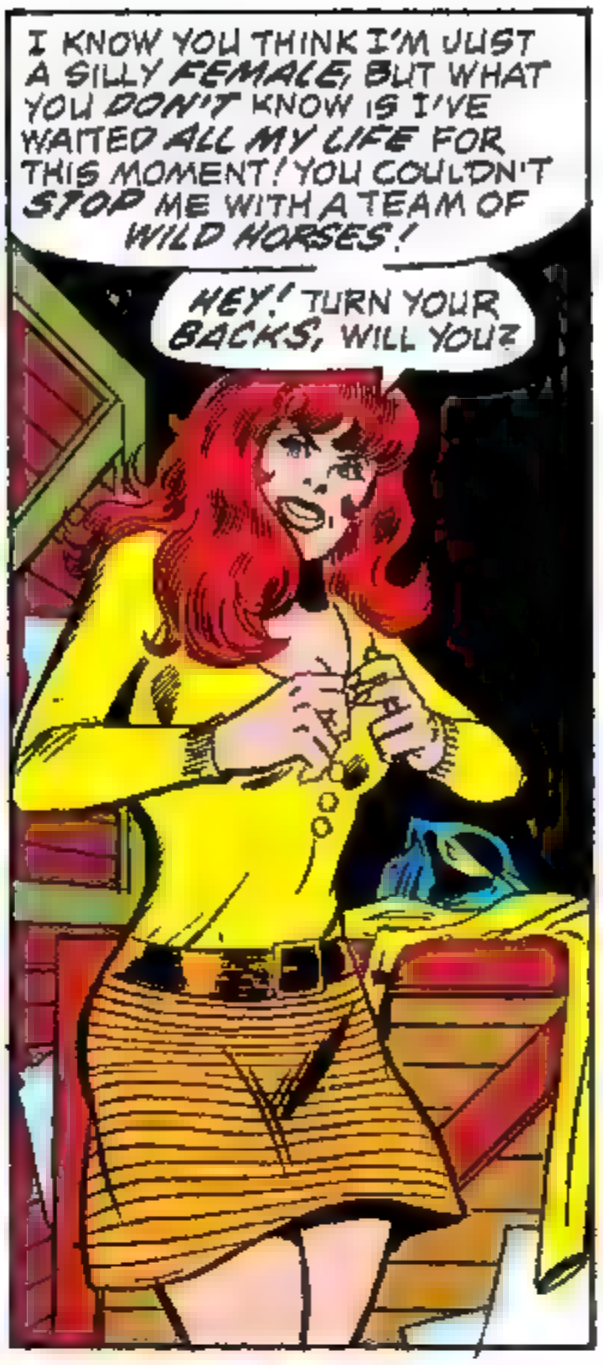

"SO WE SHOOK ON IT, AND I ALIBIED HIM BEFORE BUZZ--AND THE NEXT DAY, HE DISAPPEARED!*
"WELL, MY MARRIAGE DIDN'T LAST LONG AFTER.
"I SPENT THE MONTHS AFTER THE DIVORCE PRAYING FOR THAT FURRY FINKS RETURN--
*A.A.#16 --MARV.

"--AND FINALLY IT CAME!
"I RAN HIM DOWN, THREW OUR PACT UP TO HIM--

"--AND NOW, CAPTAIN AMERICA ASKS ME IF I WANT TO BE THE NEW CAT!"
YES! YES!

NO. I'M SORRY. I'VE CHANGED MY MIND.
IT WAS JUST AN IDEA, BUT NOT A VERY GOOD ONE IT'S TOO DANGEROUS! NOT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO BUCKY-- TO ROSCOE...
NOW, LISTEN...
I CAN'T LET ANOTHER DEATH BE ON MY CONSCIENCE!

... WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET-- AND WE'RE NOT DOING SO HOT SO FAR-- AND EITHER OF YOU TWO WOULD LOOK SILLY IN THIS OUTFIT--
-- GIVE IT HERE!
BUT--


I KNOW YOU THINK I'M JUST A SILLY FEMALE, BUT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW IS I'VE WAITED ALL MY LIFE FOR THIS MOMENT! YOU COULDN'T STOP ME WITH A TEAM OF WILD HORSES!
HEY! TURN YOUR BACKS, WILL YOU?

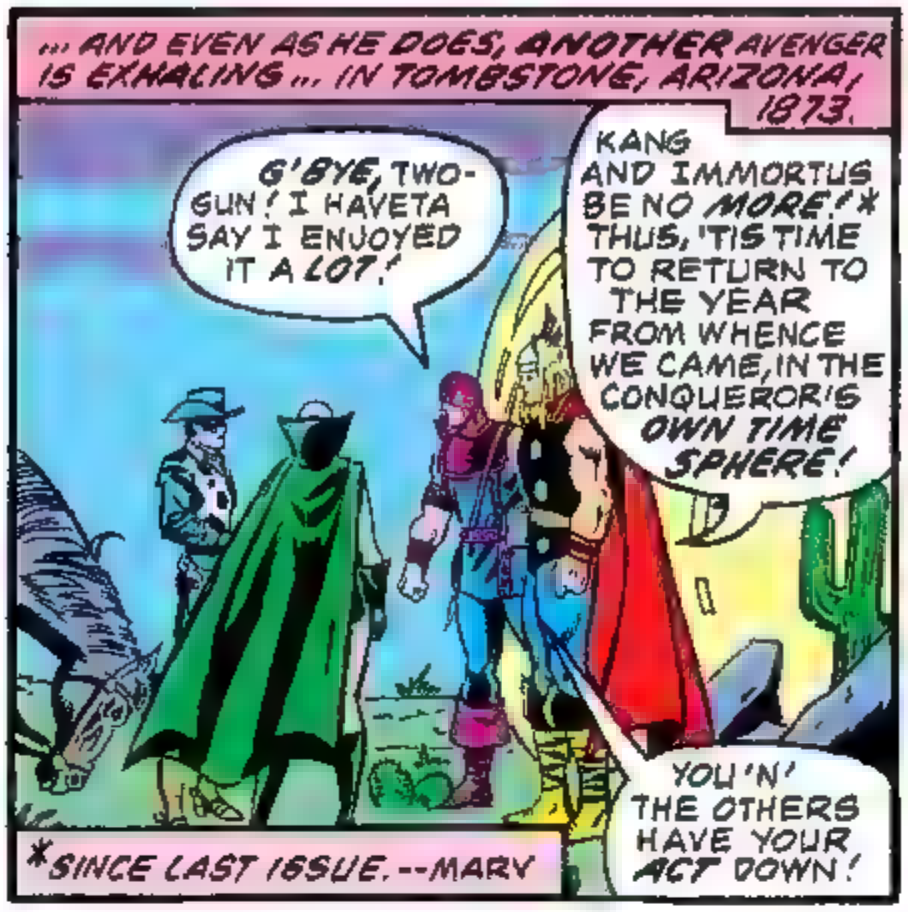
THIS IS ANOTHER FINE MESS YOU'VE GOTTEN US INTO!
WAIT A MINUTE, AVENGER!
AS I RECALL, YOU THOUGHT OF IT FIRST!

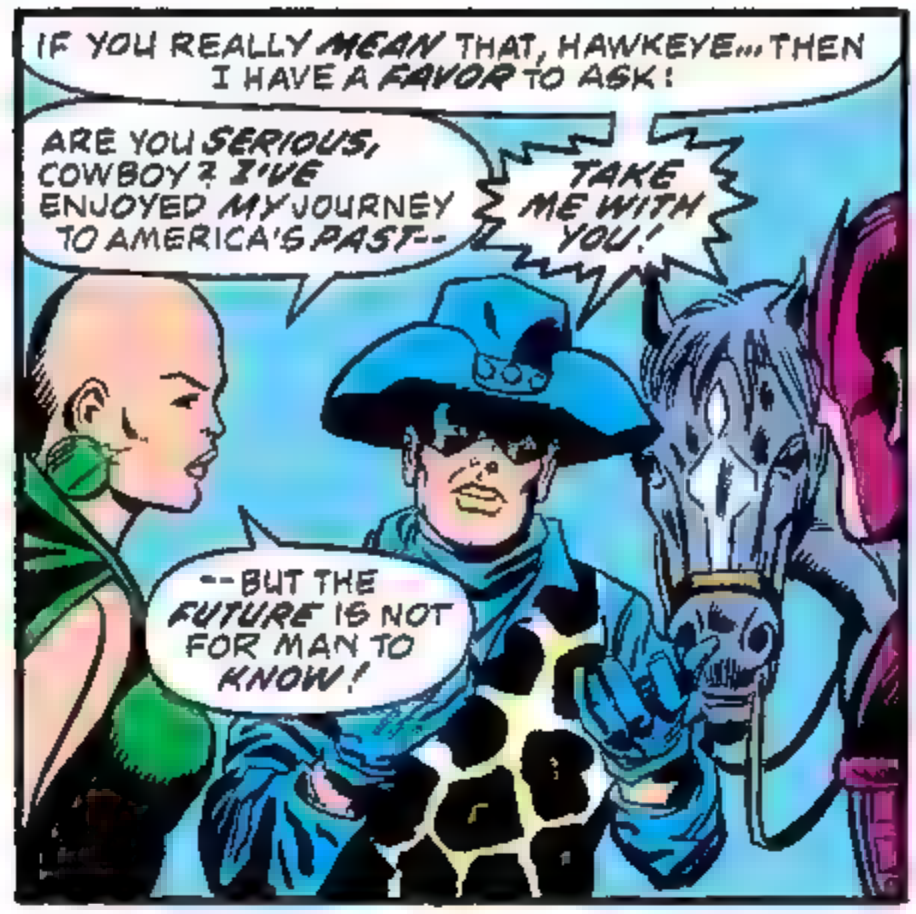
NOW, NOW, BOYS... BRAND OBVIOUSLY HAD NO CURRENT USE FOR THIS!
THEY BOUGHT THE BIG-LEAGUERS-- THE SQUADRON SUPREME!

YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO STAND ANY BETTER CHANCE AGAINST THEM THAN YOU DID BEFORE?
THEY STEP ON CATS!

THEN I'LL BE SOMETHING MORE THAN A CAT!
TURN AROUND, GENTLEMEN, AND MEET--

--THE HELLCAT!
HANDLE WITH CARE
BRAND CORP
SHIPPING NOTICE
BRAND CORP.
THIS UP
BRAND CORP.
SHE'S NOT THE SIGHT THEY EXPECT TO SEE! THE RUMPLED GIRL IN THE BORROWED COSTUME ISN'T THERE ANY MORE!
CROUCHED IN HER PLACE, CLAWS GLEAMING IN THE FEEBLE LAMPLIGHT, IS A FAR MORE IMPRESSIVE FORM... A FAR MORE SINISTER FORM.
EVEN IRON MAN CATCHES HIS BREATH...


... AND EVEN AS HE DOES, ANOTHER AVENGER IS EXHALING ... IN TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA, 1873.
G'BYE, TWO-GUN! I HAVETA SAY I ENJOYED IT A LOT!
KANG AND IMMORTUS BE NO MORE!* THUS, 'TIS TIME TO RETURN TO THE YEAR FROM WHENCE WE CAME, IN THE CONQUEROR'S OWN TIME SPHERE!
YOU 'N' THE OTHERS HAVE YOUR ACT DOWN!
*SINCE LAST ISSUE. --MARV

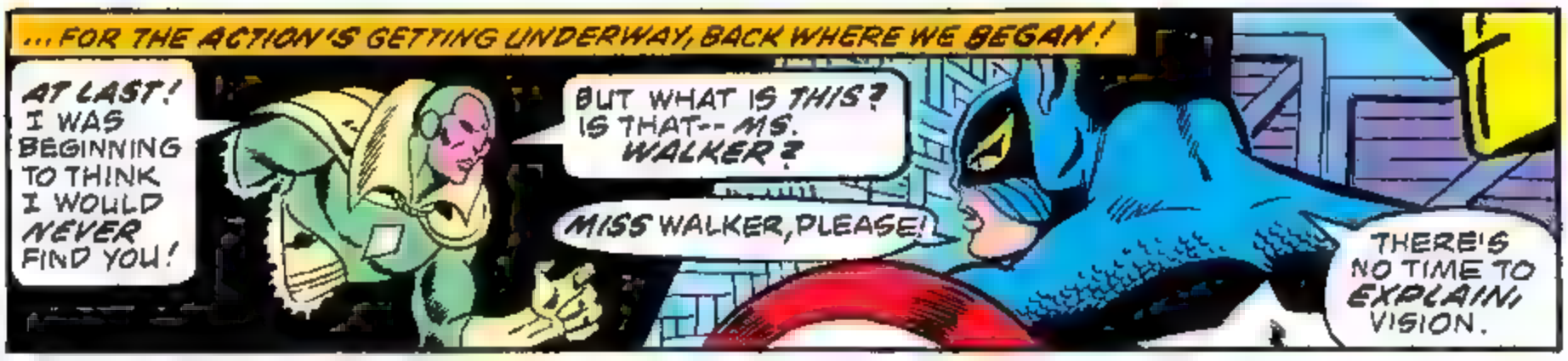

IF YOU REALLY MEAN THAT, HAWKEYE... THEN I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK!
ARE YOU SERIOUS, COWBOY? I'VE ENJOYED MY JOURNEY TO AMERICA'S PAST--
TAKE ME WITH YOU!
--BUT THE FUTURE IS NOT FOR MAN TO KNOW!

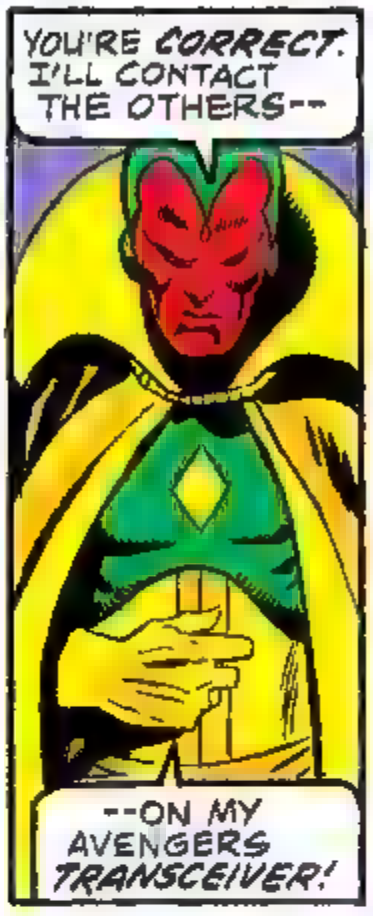
I'VE BEEN GIVIN' IT A LOT OF THOUGHT, MOONDRAGON. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN MORE OF AN ADVENTURER THAN A SIMPLE LAWMAN--

--AND THERE ARE MORE ADVENTURES TO BE FOUND WITH Y'ALL THAN IN MY OWN TIME!
WELL SPOKEN, MY FRIEND! BUT THO' THOU DIDST EXHIBIT GREAT DARING HERE THIS DAY--
--WHAT OF SKILLS-- AND KNOWLEDGE OF OUR ADVANCED CIVILIZATION?

I CAN MANAGE!
I BELIEVE YOU, TWO-GUN-- BUT JUST IN CASE YOU NEED ANY HELP, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE YOURSELF A PERSONAL TEACHER!

YOU CAN COME ALONG WITH ME, 'CAUSE AS OF WHEN WE GET BACK--
--I'M LEAVING THE AVENGERS AGAIN!
MORE NEXT ISSUE...


...FOR THE ACTION'S GETTING UNDERWAY, BACK WHERE WE BEGAN!
AT LAST! I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK I WOULD NEVER FIND YOU!
BUT WHAT IS THIS? IS THAT-- MS. WALKER?
MISS WALKER, PLEASE!
THERE'S NO TIME TO EXPLAIN, VISION.

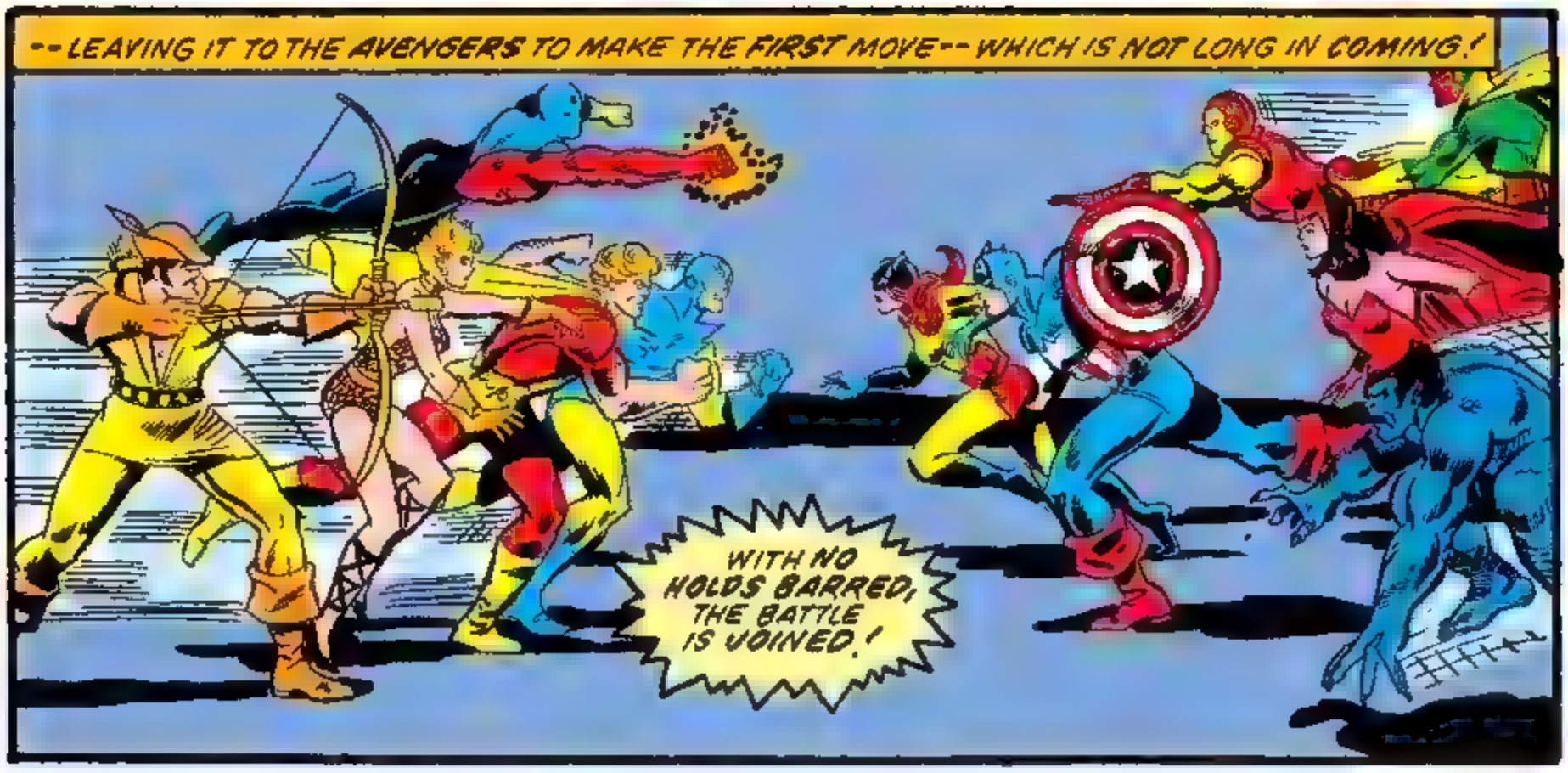

YOU'RE CORRECT. I'LL CONTACT THE OTHERS--
--ON MY AVENGERS TRANSCEIVER!

RIGHT, DARLING! GOT IT! WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
YEAH! BYE, DARLING!

AND SO, THE SEXTET REGROUPS, READY TO MAKE PLANS FOR THEIR NEXT ESCAPE ATTEMPT...
...AS SOON AS THEY ACCUSTOM THEMSELVES TO THE HELLCAT!

IT'S JUST AS WELL THEY WAITED!
WH--? THE LIGHTS!

IT TOOK TIME TO TRACK YOU, FOOLS--BUT ROXXON CANNOT BE THWARTED FOREVER!
THE SQUADRON SUPREME STANDS STEADY, SMIRKING--


--LEAVING IT TO THE AVENGERS TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE--WHICH IS NOT LONG IN COMING!
WITH NO HOLDS BARRED, THE BATTLE IS JOINED!

NEXT: A BATTLE ROYAL! CRISIS ON OTHER-EARTH!

AVENGERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS®

THEY PAID ME ONE BILLION DOLLARS TO MURDER THE AVENGERS--

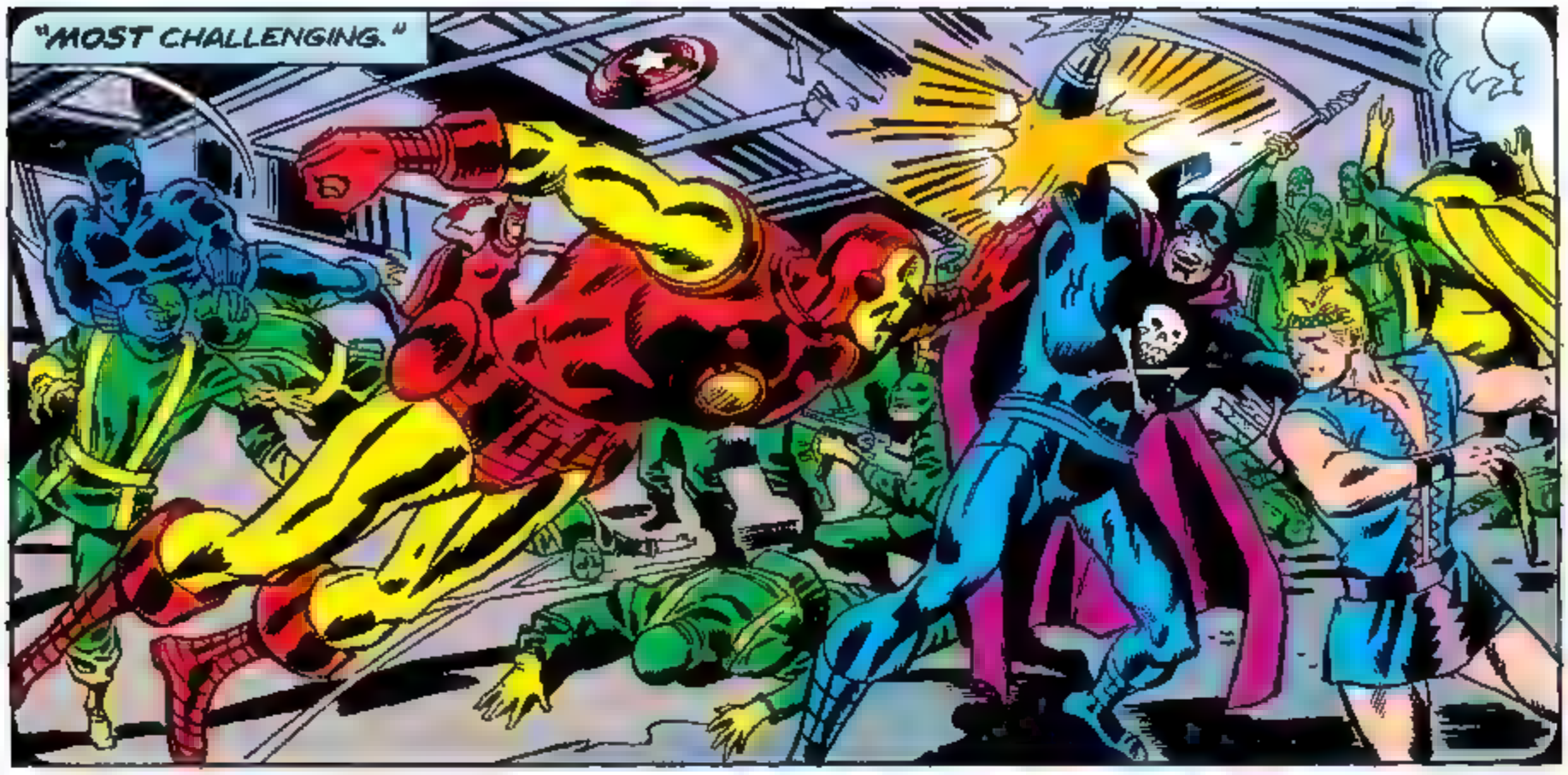
--AND THE ASSASSIN NEVER FAILS!!

KANE & ADKINS

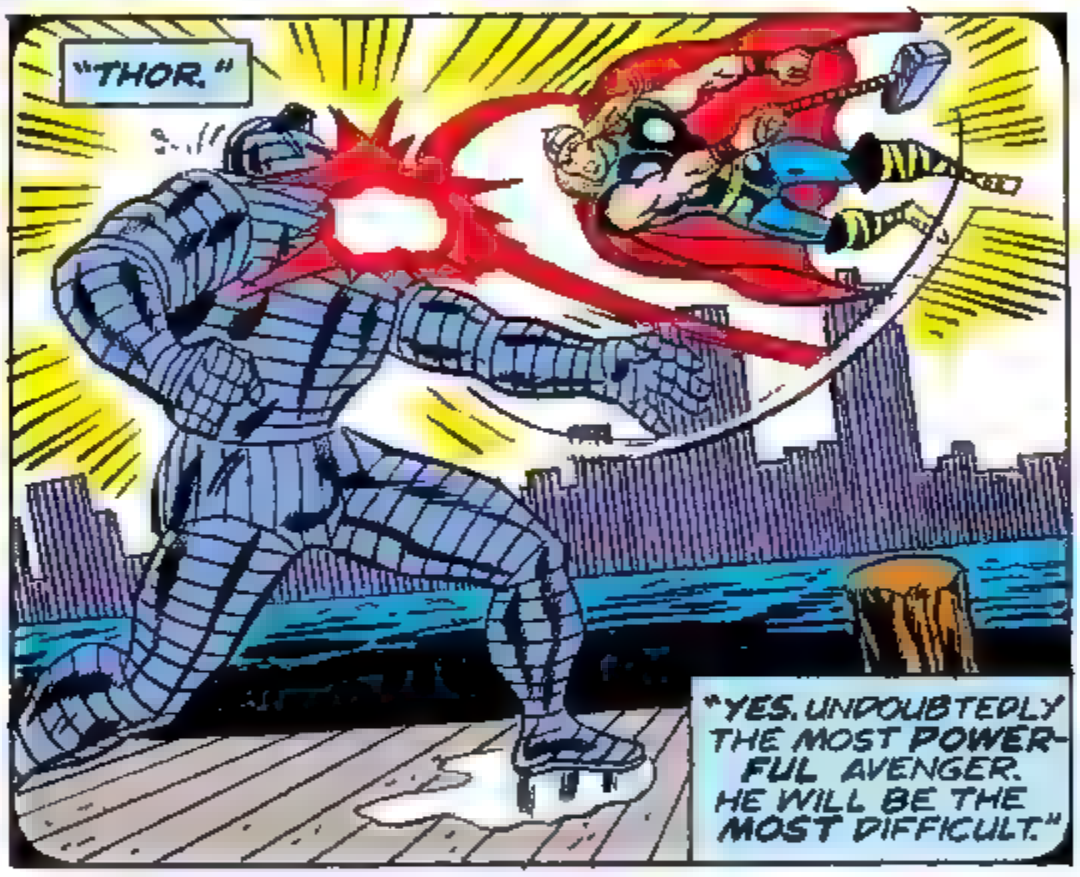
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

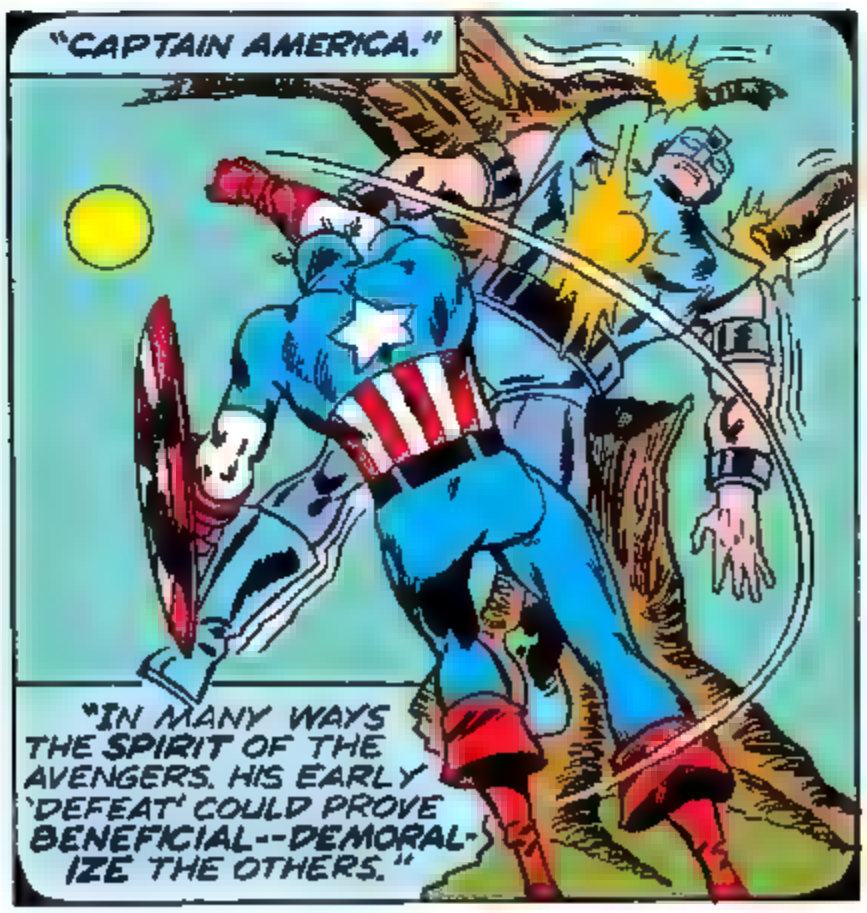
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! ™

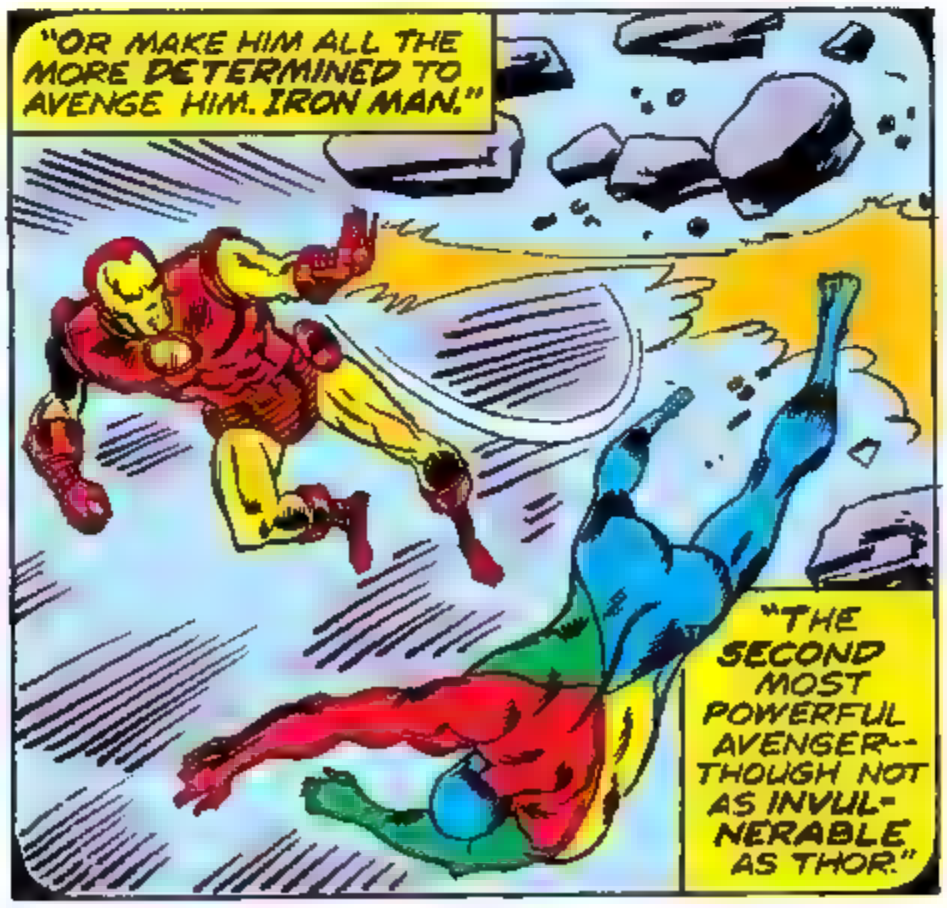
TONY ISABELLA, WRITER* | DON HECK, ARTIST | JOHN TARTAG, INKER | DON WARFIELD, COLORIST; DAVE HUNT, LETTERER | MARV WOLFMAN, EDITOR


"MOST CHALLENGING."

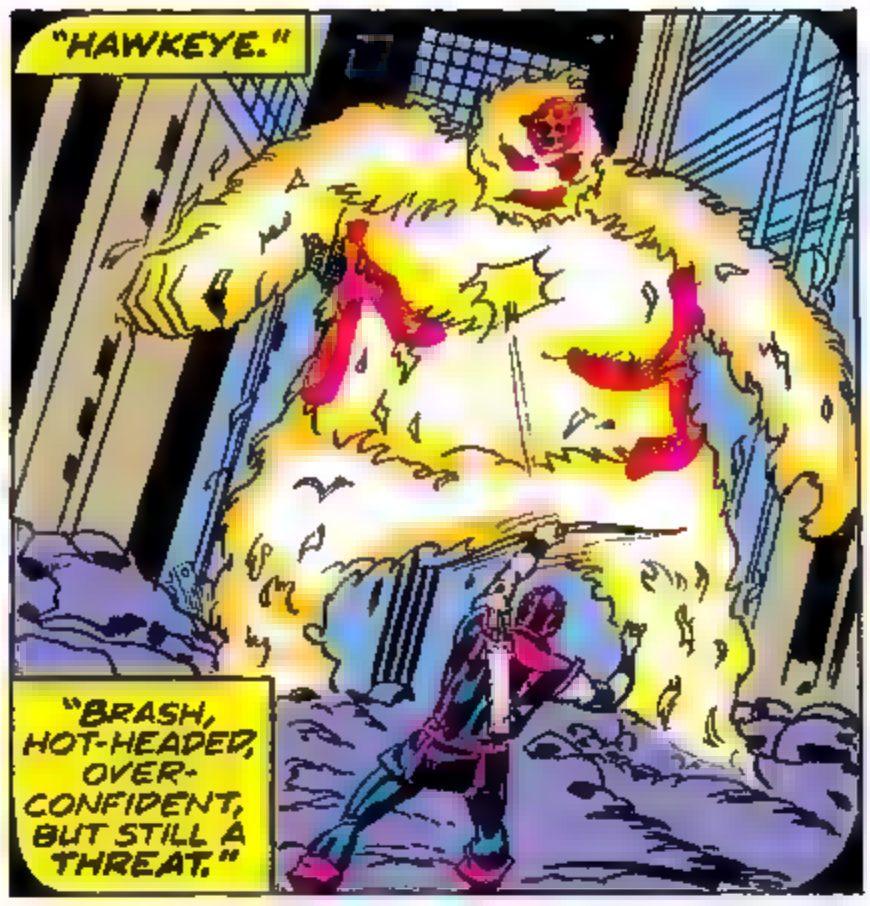
THESE FILMS...
HOW DID YOU OBTAIN THEM?
ONE CAN OBTAIN MOST ANY-THING THESE DAYS--
--FOR A PRICE.

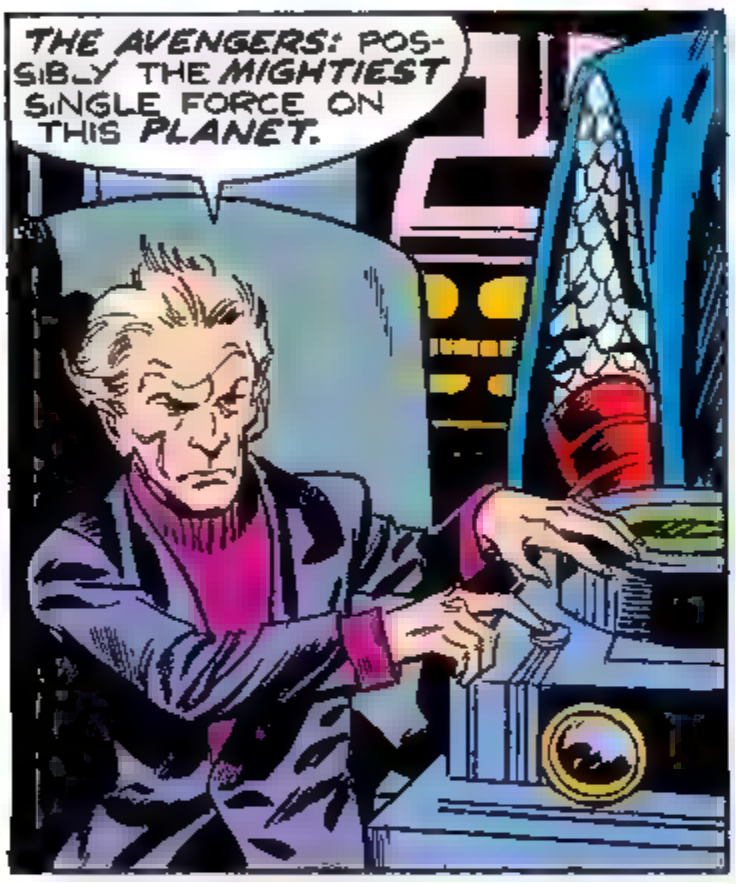

"THOR."
"YES. UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST POWER-FUL AVENGER. HE WILL BE THE MOST DIFFICULT."


"CAPTAIN AMERICA."
"IN MANY WAYS THE SPIRIT OF THE AVENGERS. HIS EARLY 'DEFEAT' COULD PROVE BENEFICIAL--DEMORAL-IZE THE OTHERS."

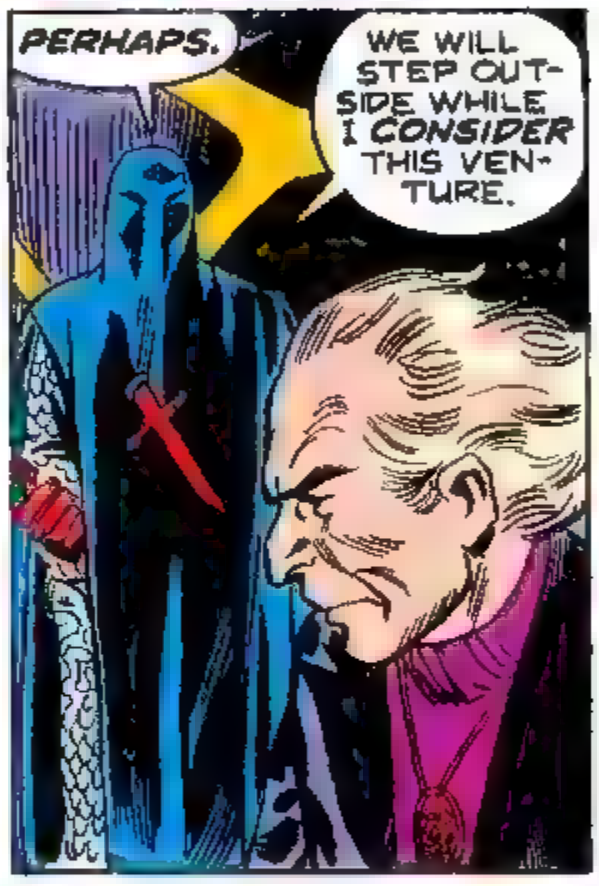

"OR MAKE HIM ALL THE MORE DETERMINED TO AVENGE HIM. IRON MAN."
"THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL AVENGER--THOUGH NOT AS INVUL-NERABLE AS THOR."

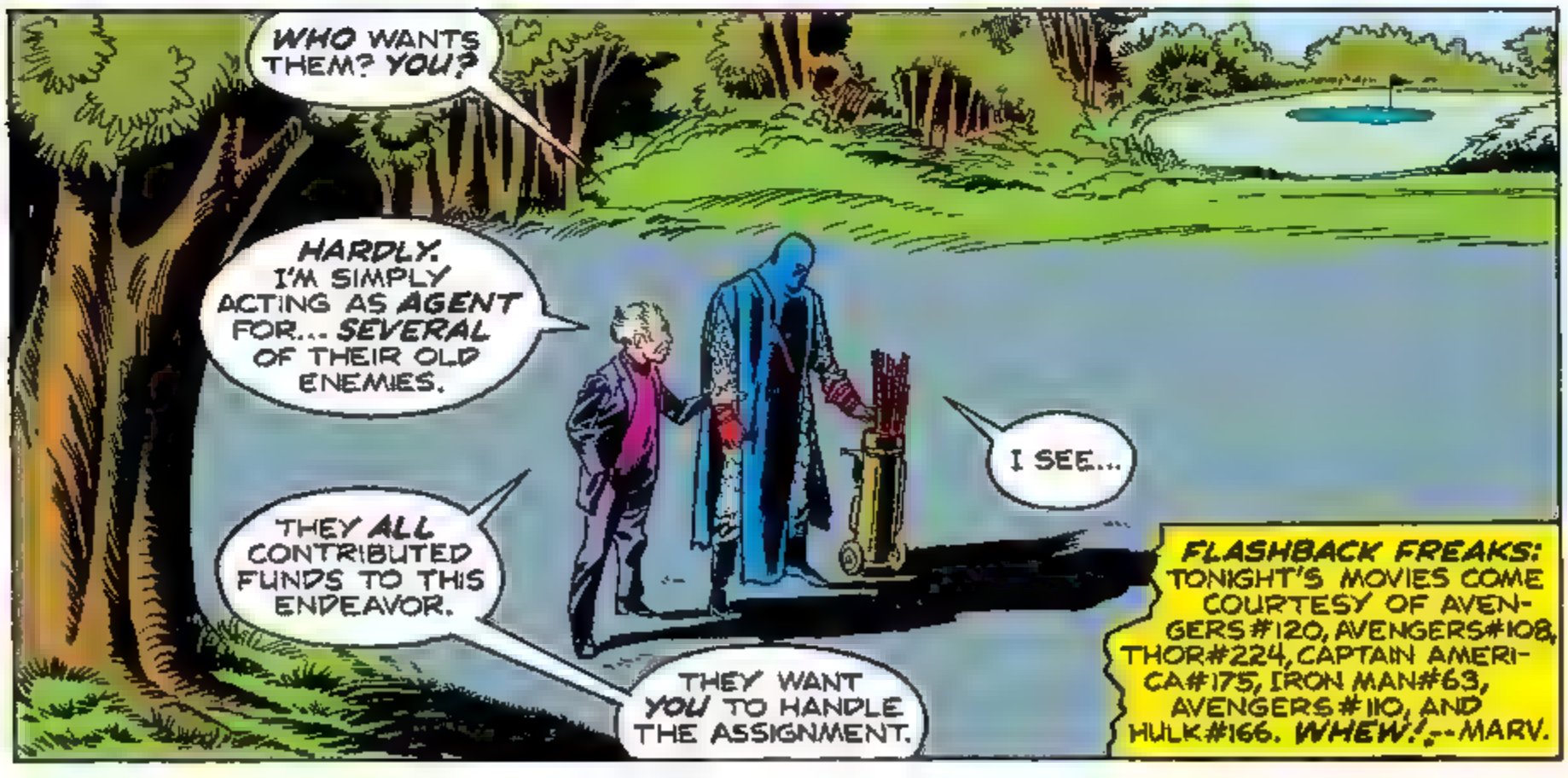
"THE VISION."
"A SYNTHETIC MAN. HIS MIND IS HUMAN, BUT COMPUTER-QUICK. DON'T GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO USE IT. YOU'LL REGRET IT.
"I REGRET ONLY THAT YOU FEEL THE NEED TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS."


"HAWKEYE."
"BRASH, HOT-HEADED, OVER-CONFIDENT, BUT STILL A THREAT."


THE AVENGERS: POSSIBLY THE MIGHTIEST SINGLE FORCE ON THIS PLANET.

CAN YOU TAKE THEM?

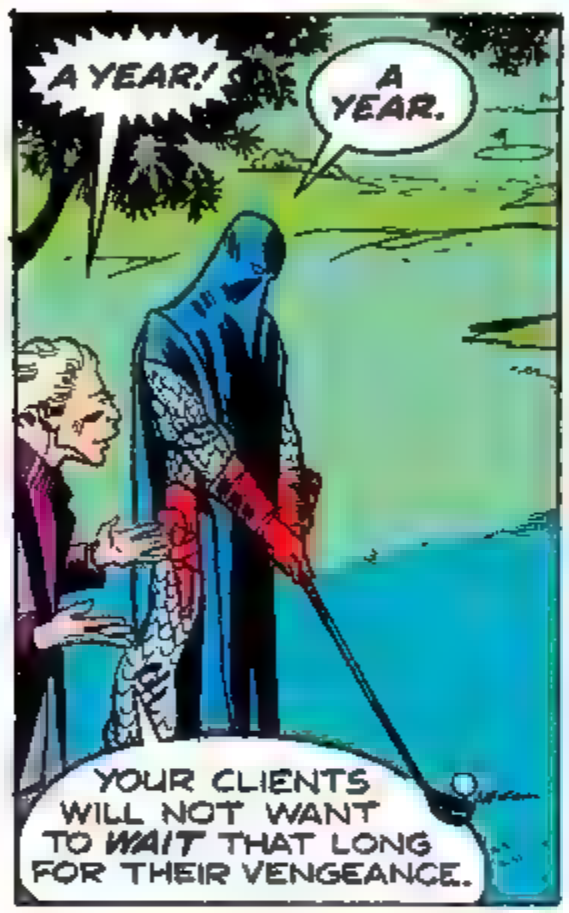

PERHAPS.
WE WILL STEP OUTSIDE WHILE I CONSIDER THIS VENTURE.

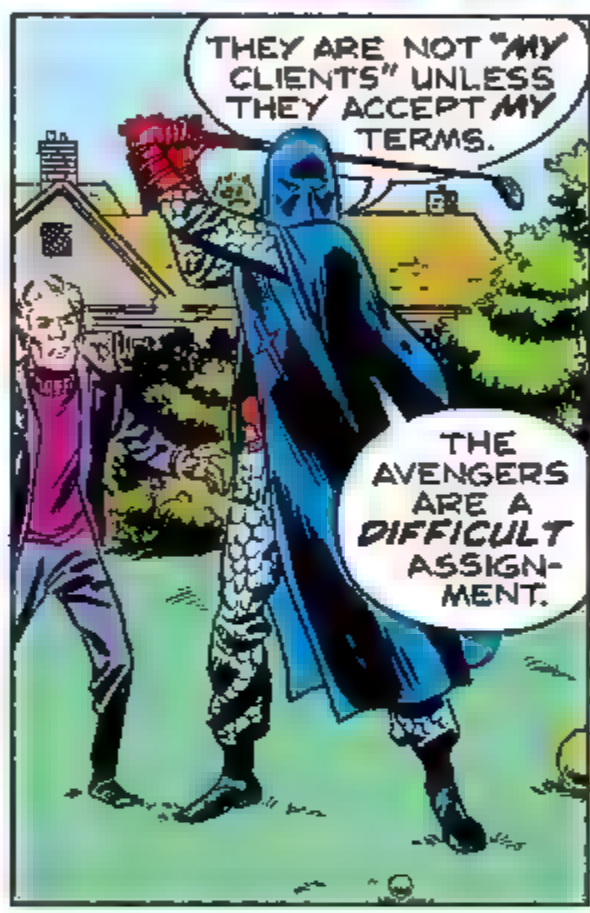

WHO WANTS THEM? YOU?
HARDLY. I'M SIMPLY ACTING AS AGENT FOR... SEVERAL OF THEIR OLD ENEMIES.
I SEE...
THEY ALL CONTRIBUTED FUNDS TO THIS ENDEAVOR.
THEY WANT YOU TO HANDLE THE ASSIGNMENT.
FLASHBACK FREAKS: TONIGHT'S MOVIES COME COURTESY OF AVENGERS #120, AVENGERS #108, THOR #224, CAPTAIN AMERICA #175, IRON MAN #63, AVENGERS #110, AND HULK #166. WHEW!--MARV.

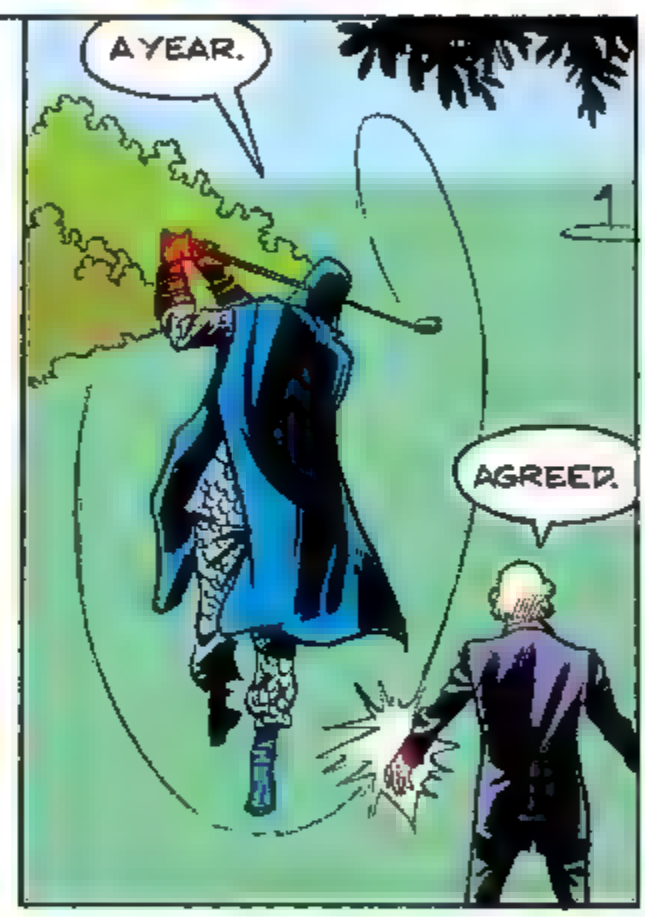
"HOW MUCH ARE YOU PREPARED TO OFFER?"
"ONE BILLION DOLLARS!"

EXPENSES?
UP TO AN ADDITIONAL BILLION.

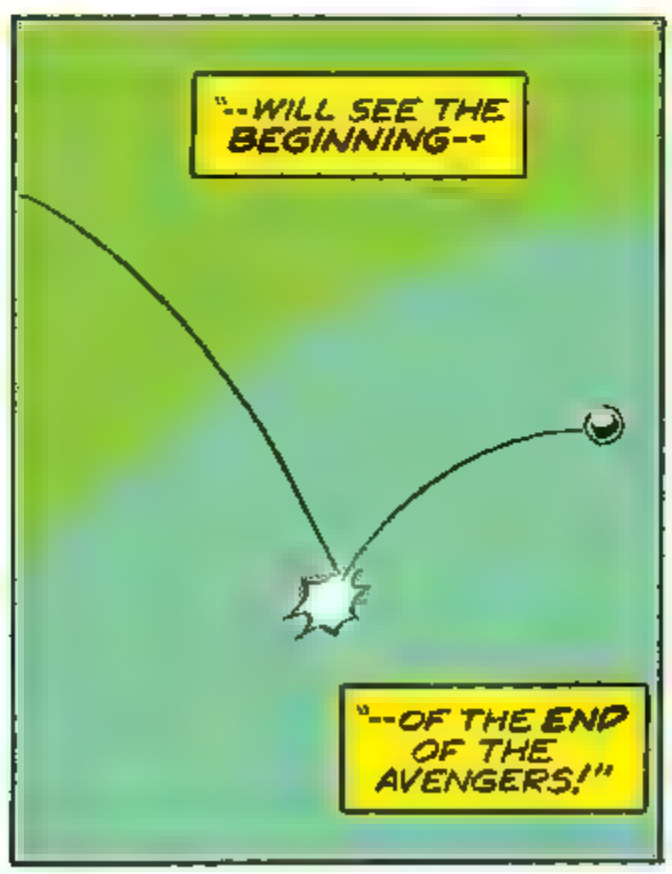
I WILL NEED TIME TO PREPARE.
A YEAR SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT.


A YEAR!
A YEAR.
YOUR CLIENTS WILL NOT WANT TO WAIT THAT LONG FOR THEIR VENGEANCE.


THEY ARE NOT "MY CLIENTS" UNLESS THEY ACCEPT MY TERMS.
THE AVENGERS ARE A DIFFICULT ASSIGN-MENT.


A YEAR.
AGREED.

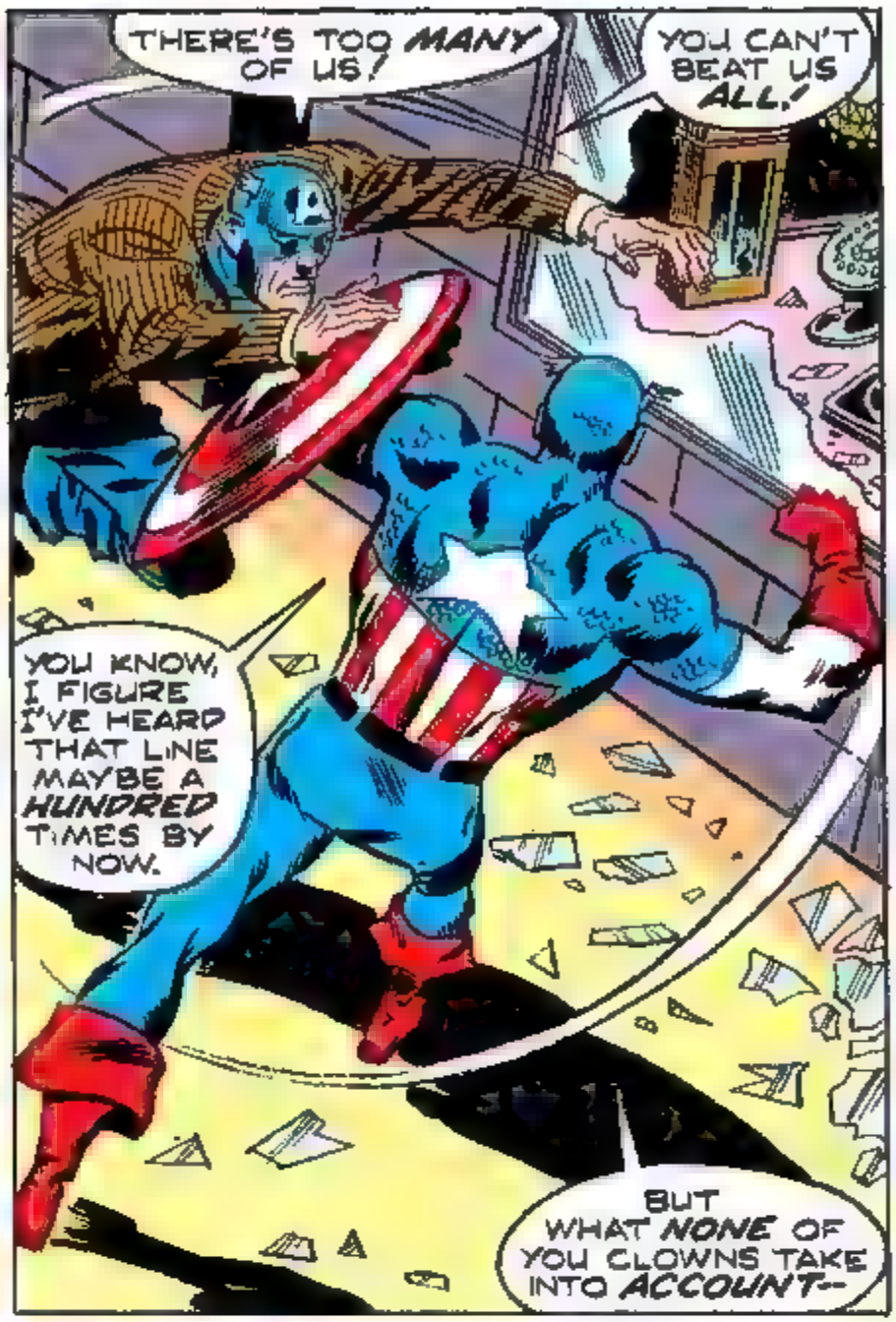
"THEN ONE YEAR FROM NOW, MY FRIEND--


"--WILL SEE THE BEGINNING--
"--OF THE END OF THE AVENGERS!"

"FOR, AS YOU KNOW--
"--THE ASSASSIN NEVER FAILS!"
END CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER TWO
TARGET: CAPTAIN AMERICA
HEY, FELLAS --WHAT'S WITH THE MASKS?
ISN'T THAT ADDING INSULT TO ARMED ROBBERY?
IT'S THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA!
WASTE 'IM!
IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT. THE PUSHERS HAVE BEEN HIT TONIGHT. HIT HARD.
HE FEELS PROUD. PERHAPS JUST ONE KID'S PASSAGE INTO MANHOOD HAS BEEN MADE EASIER BY HIS DEEDS THIS EVE.
--SOMEONE'S TOMORROW WILL BE EASIER.
THAT'S ALL THE REWARD THERE'S EVER BEEN-- WHETHER HE'S FOUGHT THE NAZIS OR THE PUSHERS OR COMMON THUGS-- THE KNOWLEDGE THAT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE'S DONE TODAY--
IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT.
AND IT'S NOT OVER YET!

WASTE ME?
NOT ON YOUR BEST DAY, MISTER!
URK!
THANG


THERE'S TOO MANY OF US!
YOU CAN'T BEAT US ALL!
YOU KNOW, I FIGURE I'VE HEARD THAT LINE MAYBE A HUNDRED TIMES BY NOW.
BUT WHAT NONE OF YOU CLOWNS TAKE INTO ACCOUNT--

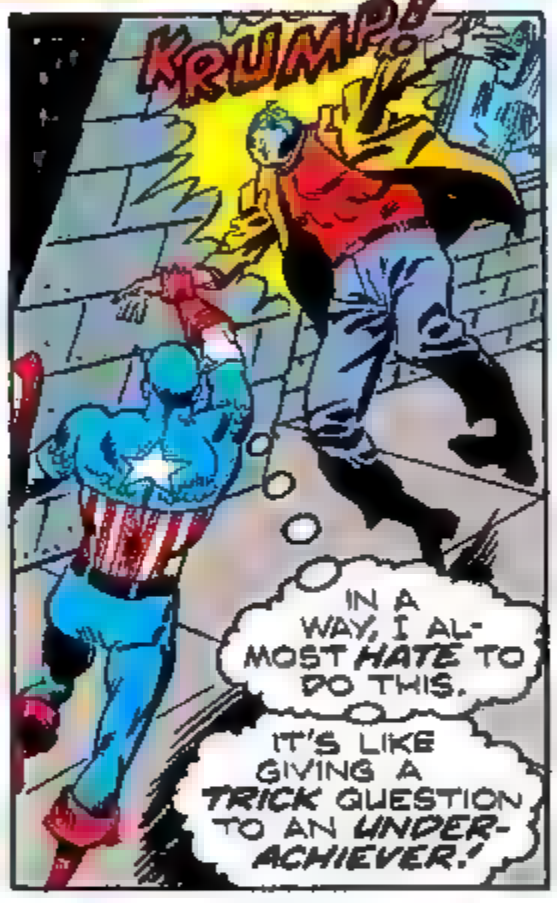
--IS THAT I'VE SPENT A LIFETIME TRAINING TO BE ABLE TO DO JUST THAT!
MURGHF!
THUMP!
TSK, TSK. YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION!

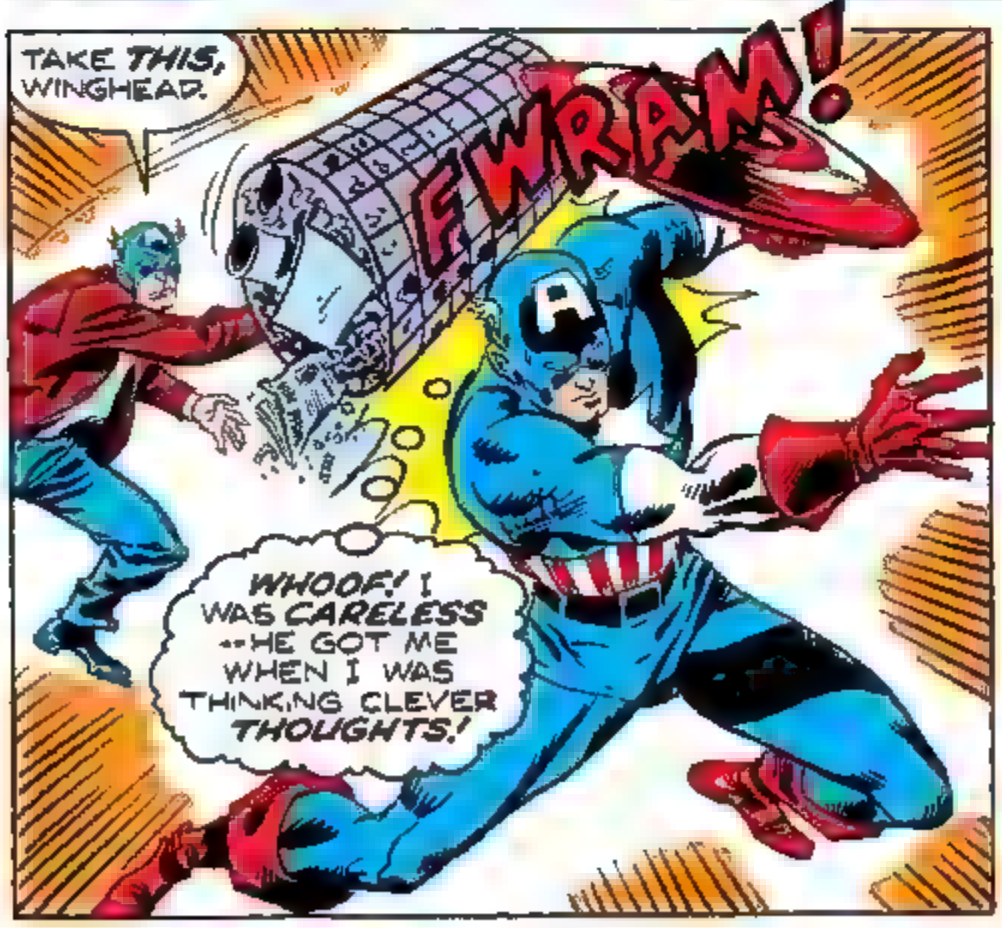
HMM... I WAS WONDERING WHEN THE SHOOTING WAS GOING TO START.
YOU MIGHT AS WELL GET IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEMS.

IT GENERALLY DOESN'T LAST LONG.
WHAM!
KLUNG
URF!

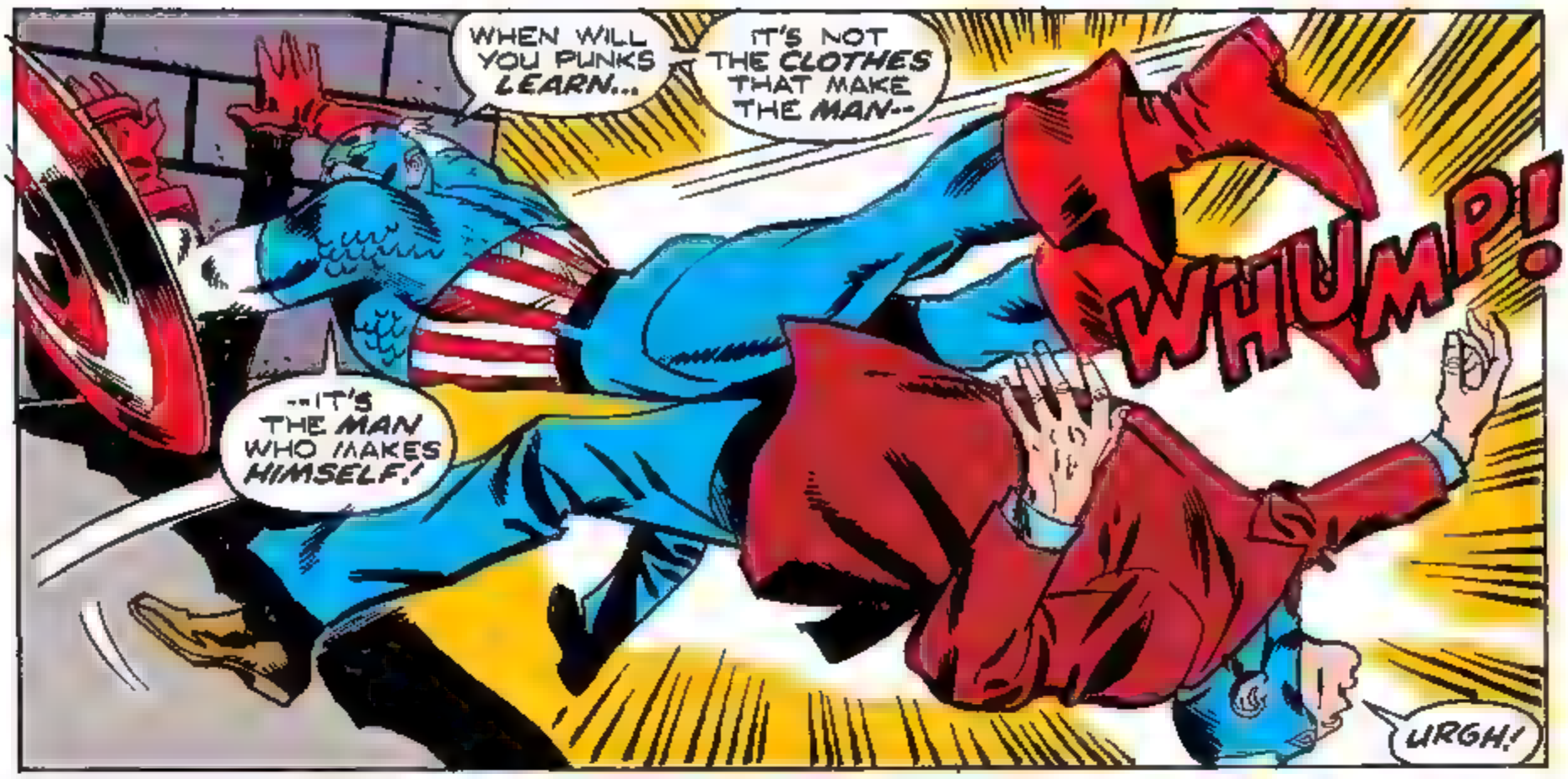
THIS GROUP KNOWS ALL THE CLICHÉS. HERE'S THE "BIG HULKING BRUTE SNEAKING UP ON ME FROM BEHIND" ROUTINE.
OF COURSE, HE'S BREATHING SO HEAVILY THAT THEY CAN HEAR HIM IN JERSEY!

AND HE STILL THINKS HE'S CATCHING ME OFF GUARD!

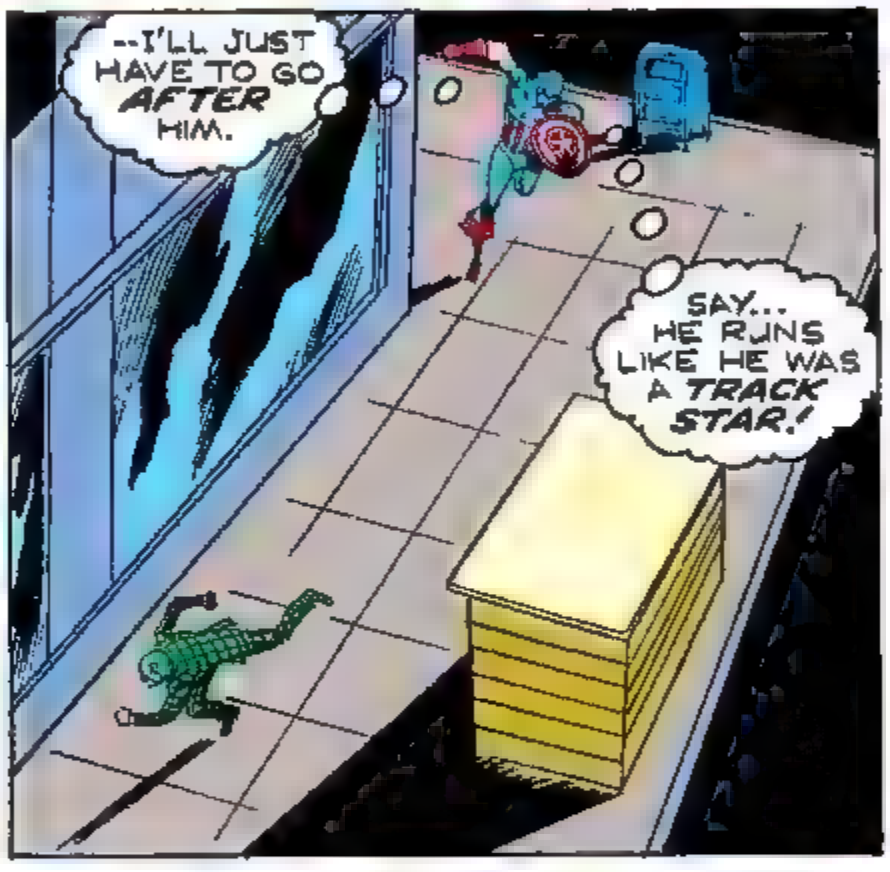

KRUMP!
IN A WAY, I ALMOST HATE TO DO THIS.
IT'S LIKE GIVING A TRICK QUESTION TO AN UNDER-ACHIEVER!


TAKE THIS, WINGHEAD.
FWRAM!
WHOOF! I WAS CARELESS --HE GOT ME WHEN I WAS THINKING CLEVER THOUGHTS!

YOU COSTUMED HOT-SHOTS ALL THINK YOU'RE SO TOUGH!
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU THINK AFTER I CUT INTO THOSE FANCY DUDS!

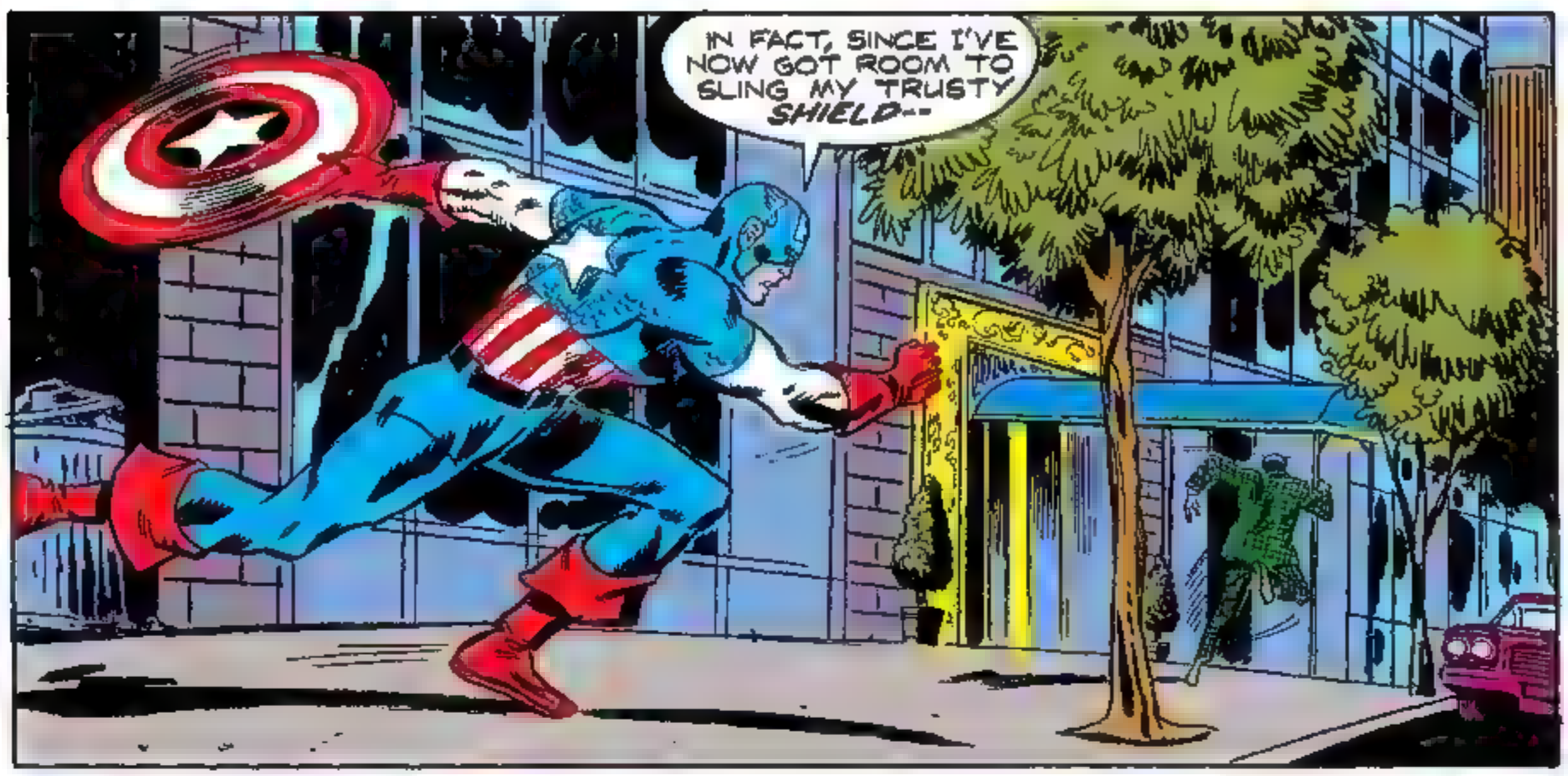

WHEN WILL YOU PUNKS LEARN...
IT'S NOT THE CLOTHES THAT MAKE THE MAN--
--IT'S THE MAN WHO MAKES HIMSELF!
WHUMP!
URGH!

THE LAST OF MY PLAYMATES IS TAKING OFF.
SINCE HIS PALS WILL BE OUT FOR HOURS-- AND SINCE I HATE TO LEAVE LOOSE ENDS LYING ABOUT--

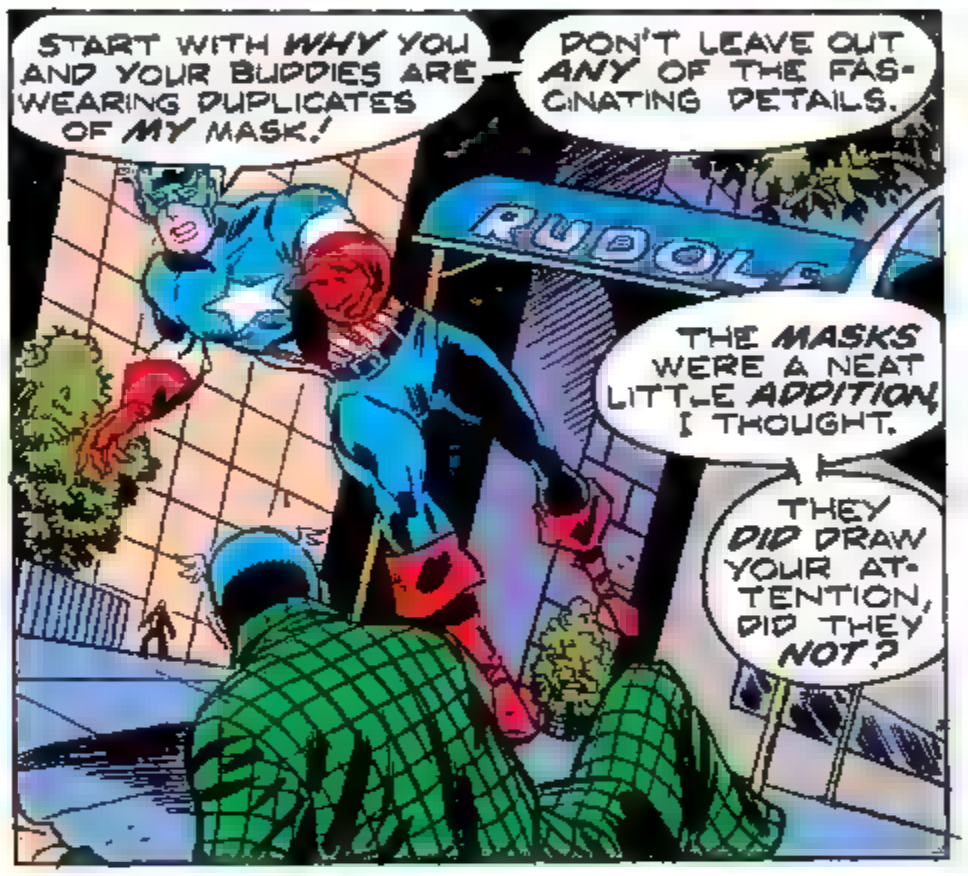

--I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM.
SAY... HE RUNS LIKE HE WAS A TRACK STAR!

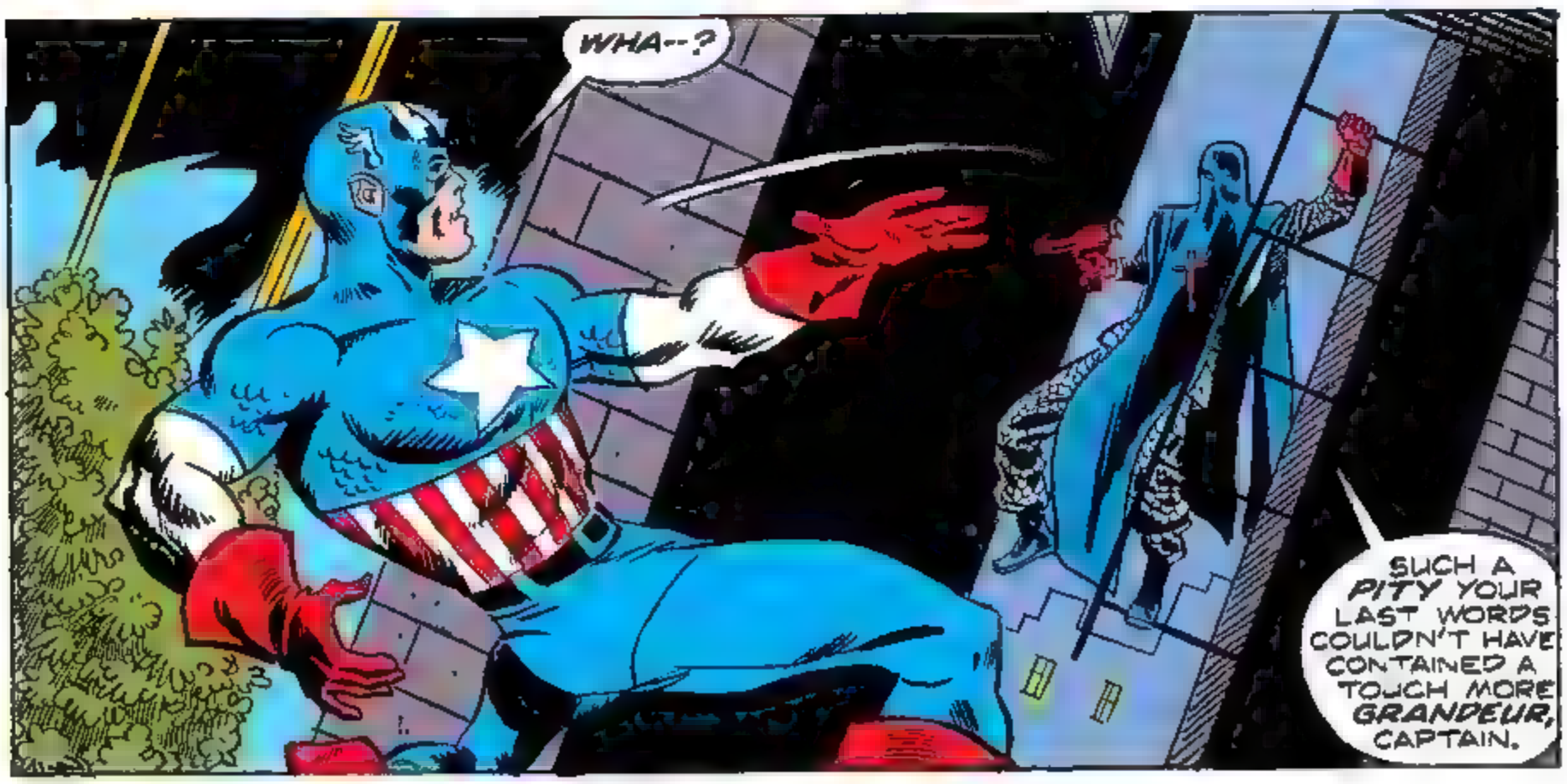
ALL GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN.
AGENT 7-A IS LURING CAPTAIN AMERICA INTO POSITION ON SCHEDULE.

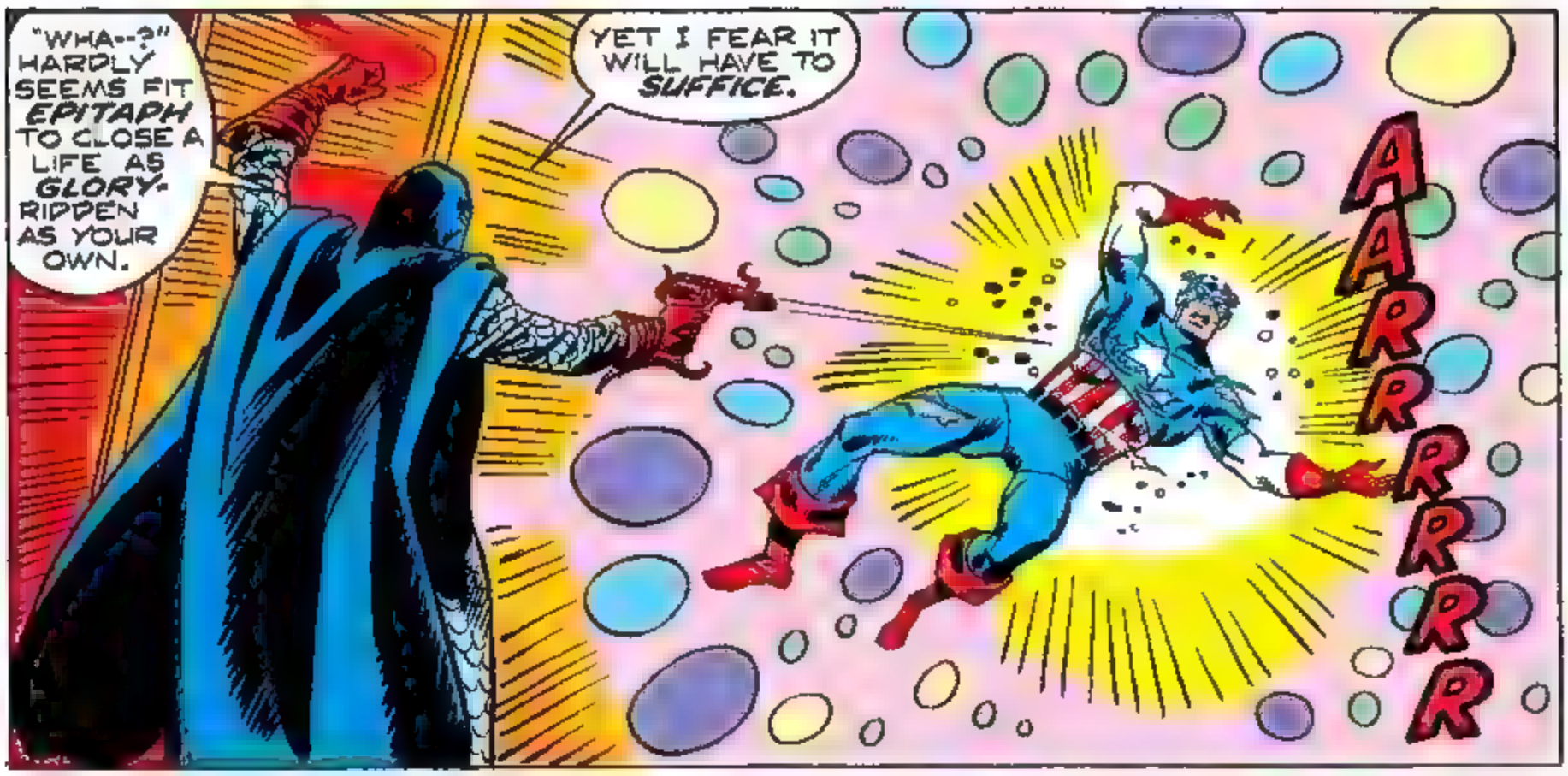
HE'S FASTER THAN WE CALCULATED.
HE MUST NOT CATCH ME UNTIL I AM IN POSITION!
GIVE IT UP, MISTER.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LOSE ME.


IN FACT, SINCE I'VE NOW GOT ROOM TO SLING MY TRUSTY SHIELD--

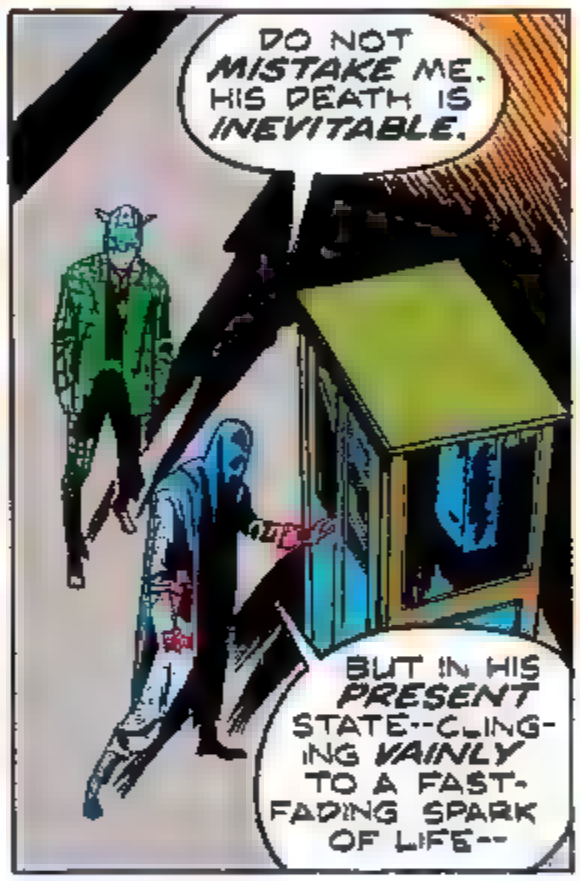
--YOU'RE TAKING A FALL!
EEYOW!
IT'S TALKING TIME, MISTER!


START WITH WHY YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES ARE WEARING DUPLICATES OF MY MASK!
DON'T LEAVE OUT ANY OF THE FASCINATING DETAILS.
THE MASKS WERE A NEAT LITTLE ADDITION, I THOUGHT.
THEY DID DRAW YOUR ATTENTION, DID THEY NOT?


WHA--?
SUCH A PITY YOUR LAST WORDS COULDN'T HAVE CONTAINED A TOUCH MORE GRANDEUR, CAPTAIN.


"WHA--?" HARDLY SEEMS FIT EPITAPH TO CLOSE A LIFE AS GLORY-RIDDEN AS YOUR OWN.
YET I FEAR IT WILL HAVE TO SUFFICE.
AARRRRRR

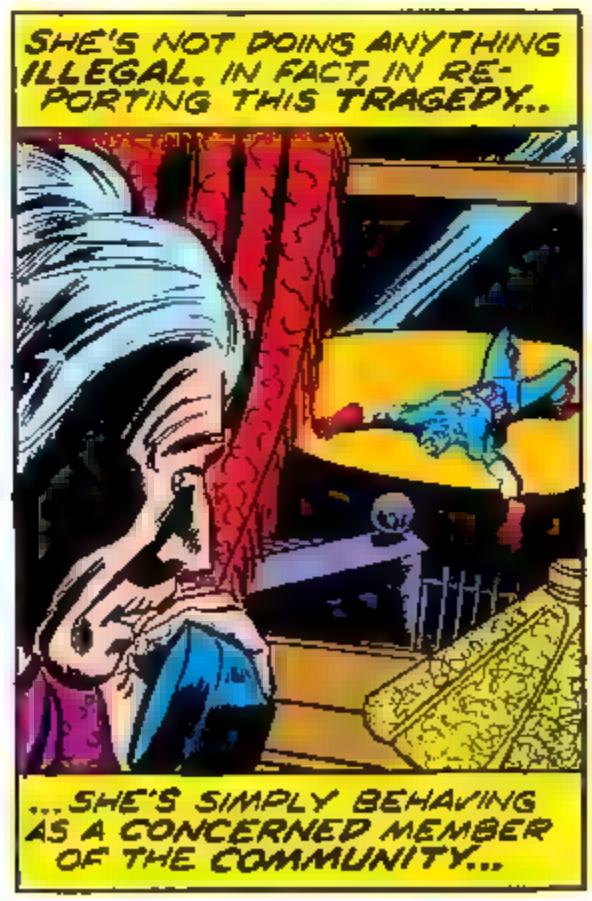
YOU DID IT!
YOU KILLED CAPTAIN AMERICA!
HE IS NOT DEAD.


DO NOT MISTAKE ME. HIS DEATH IS INEVITABLE.
BUT IN HIS PRESENT STATE--CLING-ING VAINLY TO A FAST-FADING SPARK OF LIFE--

--HE BECOMES A MOST NECESSARY COMPONENT OF MY PLAN TO KILL THE AVENGERS.

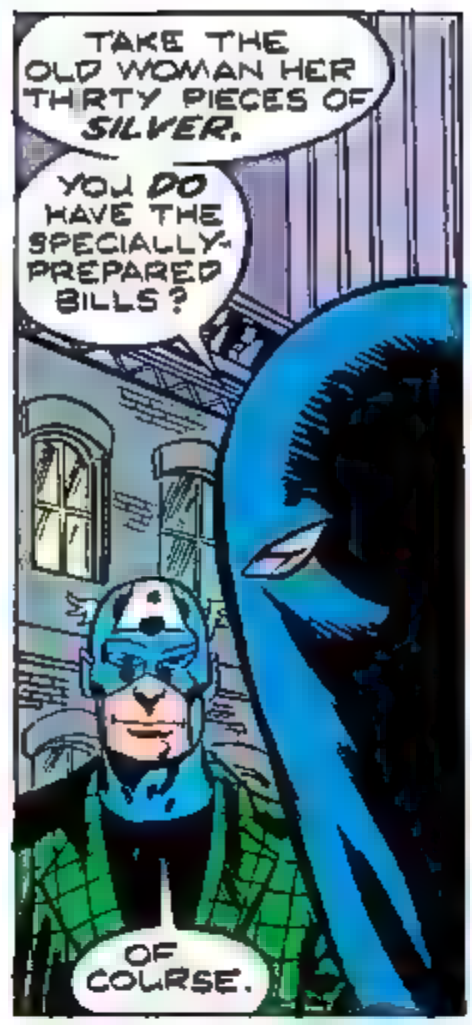
LORD KNOWS, SHE HASN'T HAD IT EASY THESE DAYS, TRYING TO FIT A FIXED PENSION TO EVER-SPIRALING COSTS.
RINGG
SO WHEN THE WOMAN CAME THIS MORNING AND OFFERED HER A THOUSAND DOLLARS TO MAKE ONE PHONE CALL...

...IT SEEMED A BETTER ANSWER TO HER ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES THAN A "WIN" BUTTON.
I'LL MAKE THE CALL RIGHT AWAY.

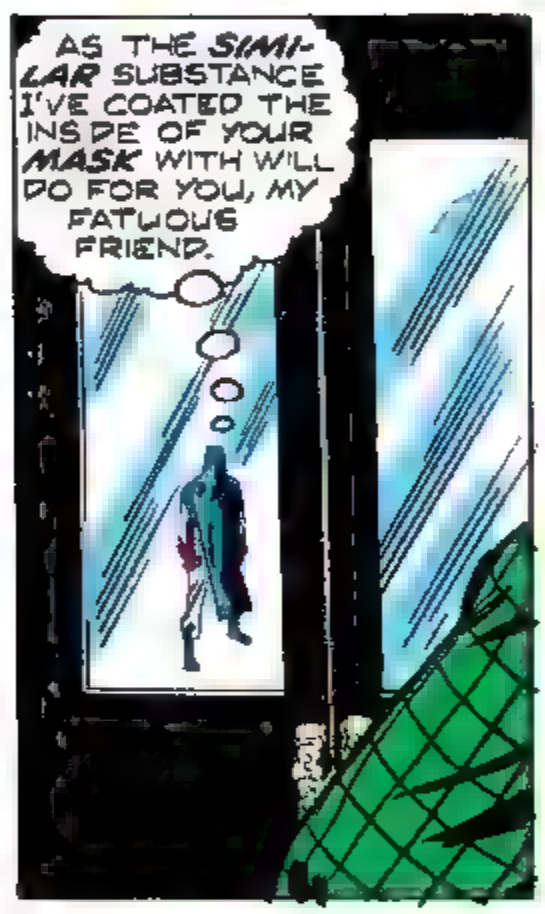

SHE'S NOT DOING ANYTHING ILLEGAL. IN FACT, IN RE-PORTING THIS TRAGEDY...
...SHE'S SIMPLY BEHAVING AS A CONCERNED MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY...

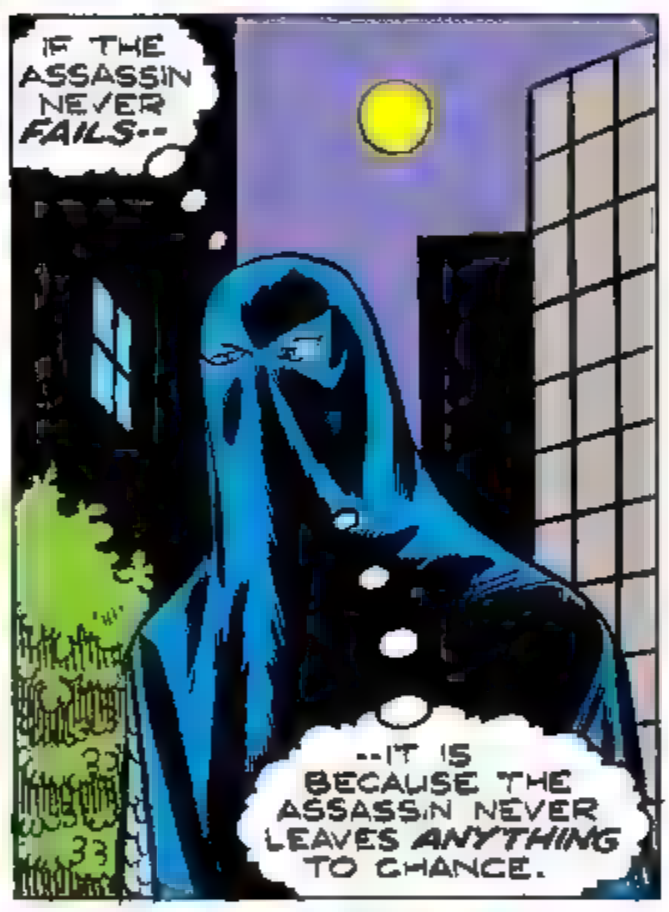
...WHO HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, NEVER ASKED HERSELF WHAT PREVENTS HER GENEROUS EMPLOYER FROM MAKING THIS CALL HIMSELF.
OPERATOR, GIVE ME THE POLICE.
I THINK THERE'S BEEN A MURDER.

SHE'S MAKING THE CALL NOW.
IT IS BEST THAT THE POLICE DO NOT HAVE AN ANONYMOUS PHONE CALL AND AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT.

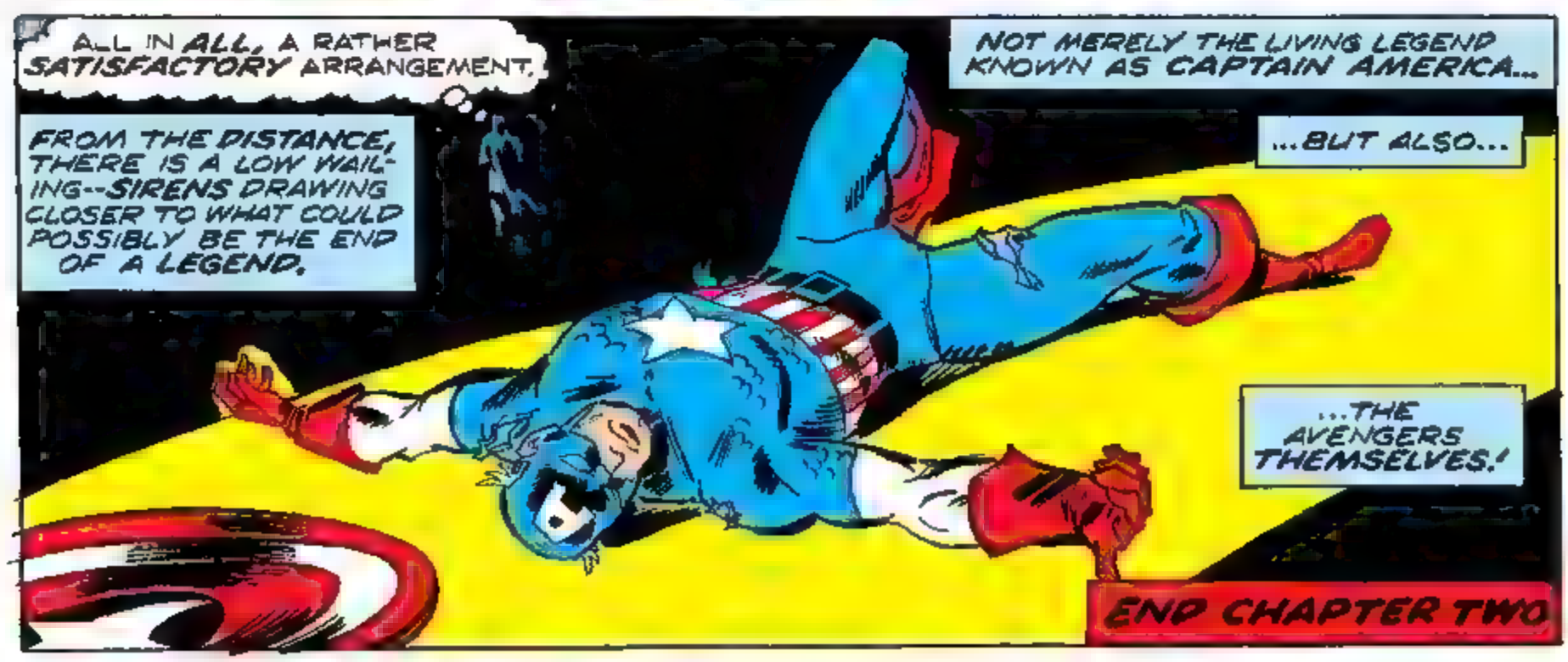

TAKE THE OLD WOMAN HER THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.
YOU DO HAVE THE SPECIALLY-PREPARED BILLS?
OF COURSE.

I HOPE THE OLD FOOL ENJOYS COUNTING HER MONEY.
THE POISON WE'VE COATED THE BILLS WITH WILL KILL HER IN A MATTER OF DAYS.

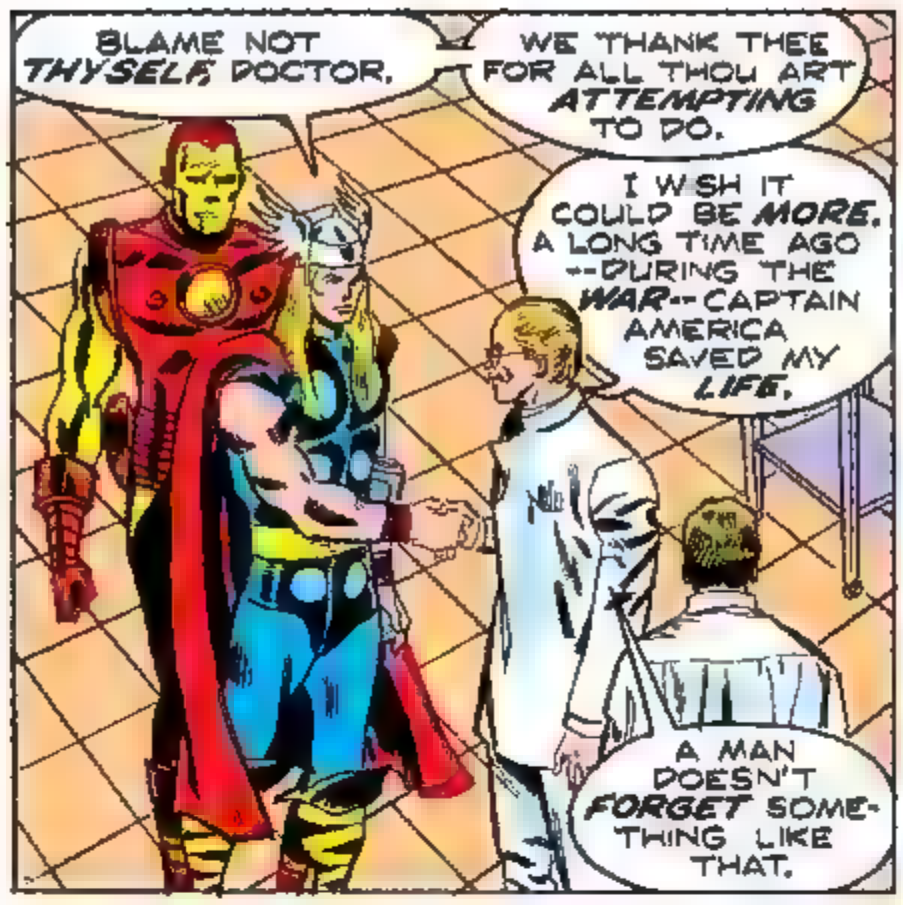

AS THE SIMILAR SUBSTANCE I'VE COATED THE INSIDE OF YOUR MASK WITH WILL DO FOR YOU, MY FATUOUS FRIEND.


IF THE ASSASSIN NEVER FAILS--
--IT IS BECAUSE THE ASSASSIN NEVER LEAVES ANYTHING TO CHANCE.

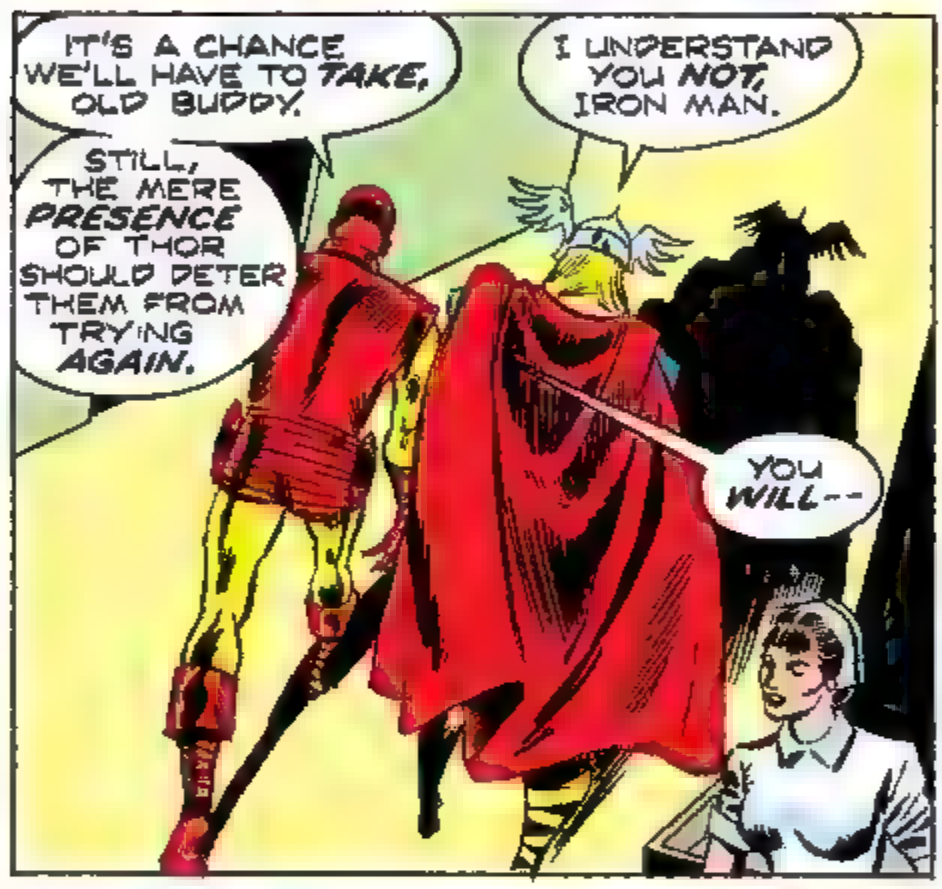
WHEN THIS ASSIGNMENT IS FINISHED, I WILL BE A BILLION DOLLARS RICHER--
--AND ALL THOSE WHO COULD POSSIBLY LINK ME WITH THE AVENGERS' DEATHS WILL BE LIKEWISE DEPARTED.


ALL IN ALL, A RATHER SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT.
FROM THE DISTANCE, THERE IS A LOW WAILING--SIRENS DRAWING CLOSER TO WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE THE END OF A LEGEND.
NOT MERELY THE LIVING LEGEND KNOWN AS CAPTAIN AMERICA...
...BUT ALSO...
...THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES!
END CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER 3
THE Small HOURS
THE SMALL HOURS: POETIC NAME FOR THE TWILIGHT TIME THAT LIES BETWIXT MIDNIGHT AND DAWN.
YET IF THOSE HOURS BE SO SCANT...
...WHY DOES EACH ONE SEEM TO LAST AN ETERNITY ON THIS TENSE NIGHT?
THOR! WHAT IS IT?
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LOOK SO ...GRIM.
'TIS THESE CHARTS, IRON MAN--AND THE FAR GRIMMER TRUTH THEY DO REVEAL.
I WISH I COULD BE OPTIMISTIC, AVENGERS. BUT THE AWFUL FACT IS:
CAPTAIN AMERICA IS DYING--
--AND WE DON'T KNOW WHY!


BLAME NOT THYSELF, DOCTOR.
WE THANK THEE FOR ALL THOU ART ATTEMPTING TO DO.
I WISH IT COULD BE MORE. A LONG TIME AGO --DURING THE WAR-- CAPTAIN AMERICA SAVED MY LIFE.
A MAN DOESN'T FORGET SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

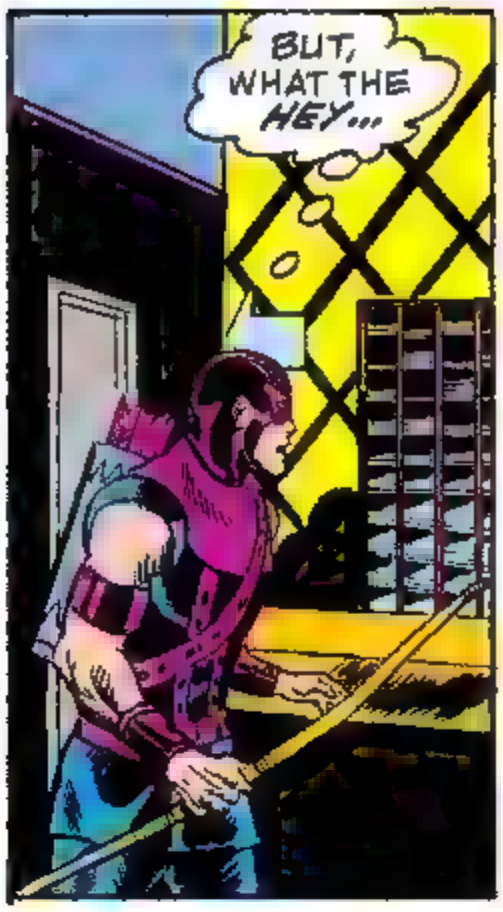
MAYBE IT'S TIME WE GOT ANOTHER OPINION, THOR.
LIKE PERHAPS THAT OF DOCTOR DON BLAKE?
BUT WHAT IF THE CAPTAIN'S UNKNOWN ENEMIES SHOULDST ATTACK ANEW?
THOU WOULDST NEED THE POWER OF THOR THEN.


IT'S A CHANCE WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE, OLD BUDDY.
I UNDERSTAND YOU NOT, IRON MAN.
STILL, THE MERE PRESENCE OF THOR SHOULD DETER THEM FROM TRYING AGAIN.
YOU WILL--

"--ONCE WE REACH MY LONG ISLAND COMPLEX."
CAP DYING!
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I GUESS I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF WINGHEAD AS INDESTRUCTIBLE.

HUH? WHERE ARE SHELLHEAD AND GOLDILOCKS RUNNING OFF TO?
I THOUGHT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO KEEP CAP UNDER CONSTANT GUARD --IN CASE THE CREEPS WHO DROPPED HIM COME BACK FOR SECONDS.
EVEN THOUGH, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED--

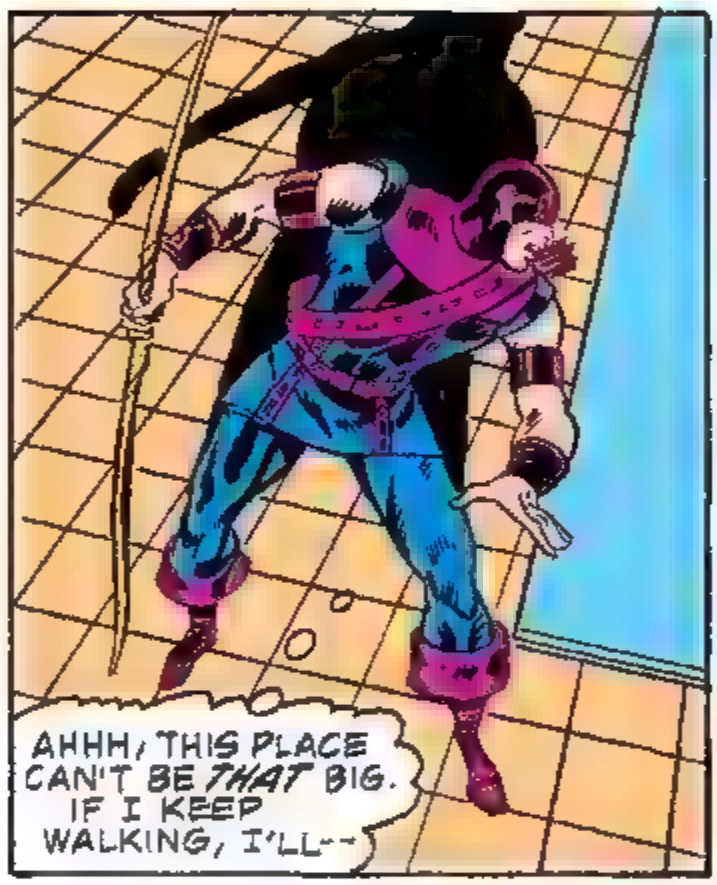
--THAT'S LIKE LOCKING THE GARAGE AFTER THE CADDY'S BEEN HOT-WIRED!
WHAT THE HECK.

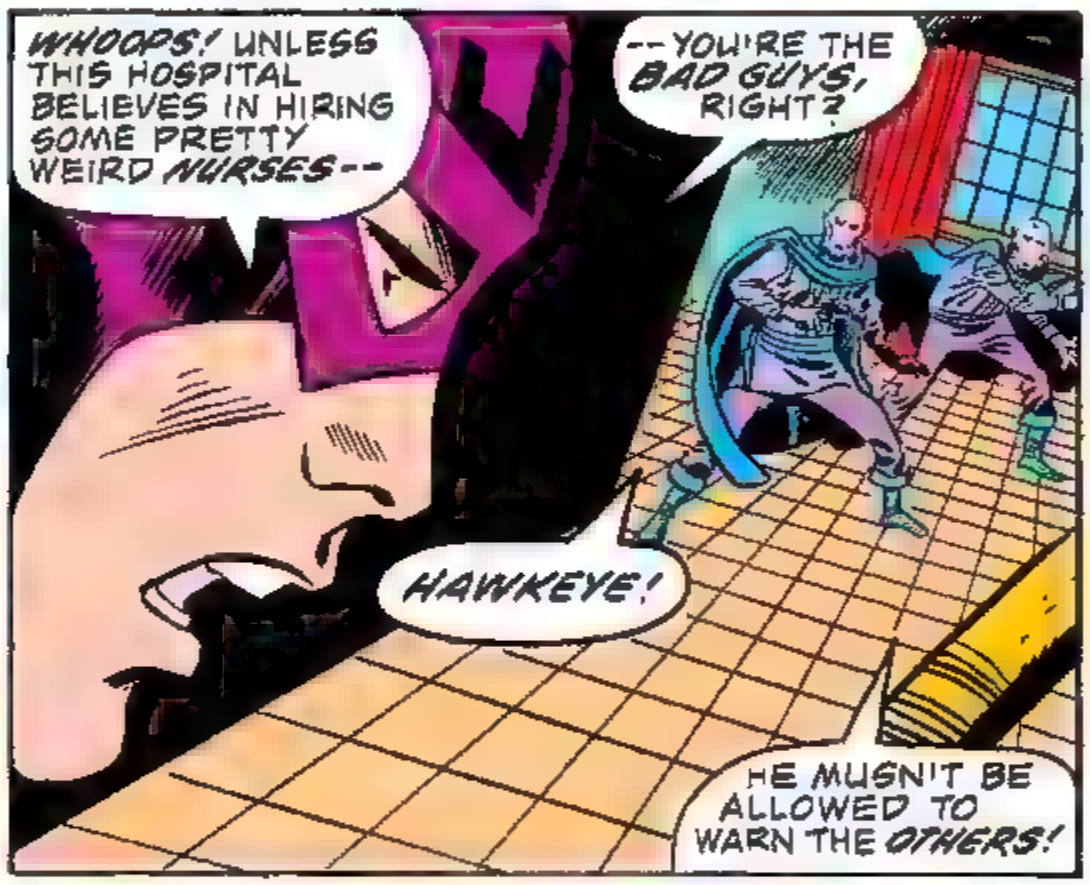

BUT, WHAT THE HEY...

THEY PROBABLY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOIN'!

WHICH IS MORE THAN THIS ARCHER CAN SAY FOR HIMSELF.
I GOT SO WRAPPED UP IN MY THOUGHTS--

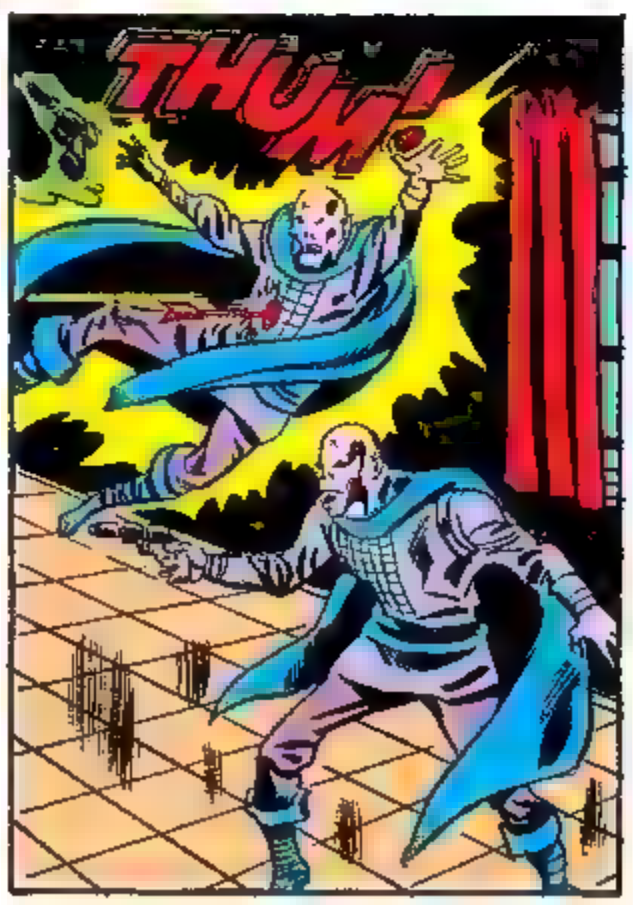
--THAT I LOST MY WAY!


AHHH, THIS PLACE CAN'T BE THAT BIG. IF I KEEP WALKING, I'LL--


WHOOPS! UNLESS THIS HOSPITAL BELIEVES IN HIRING SOME PRETTY WEIRD NURSES--
--YOU'RE THE BAD GUYS, RIGHT?
HAWKEYE!
HE MUSN'T BE ALLOWED TO WARN THE OTHERS!

DO NOT FEAR, 5-B.
HE SHALL NOT LEAVE THIS CORRIDOR ALIVE!

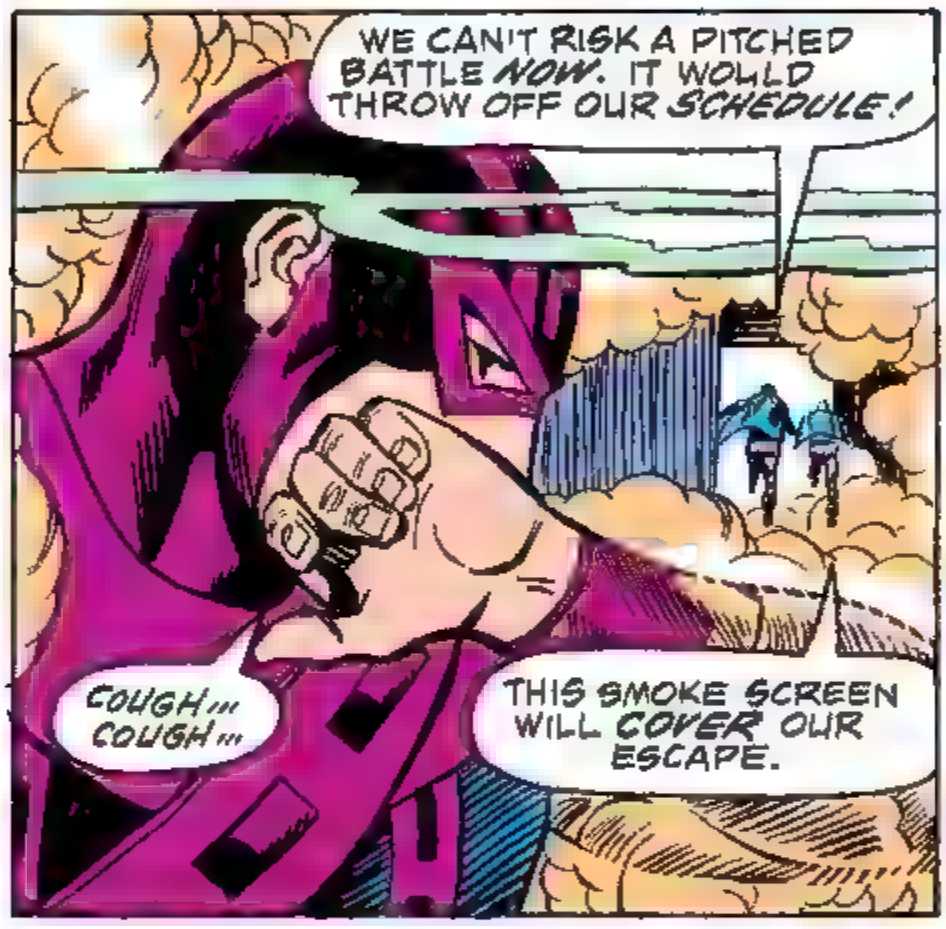
YEP--DEFINATELY THE BAD GUYS!
FZAK!


THUM!

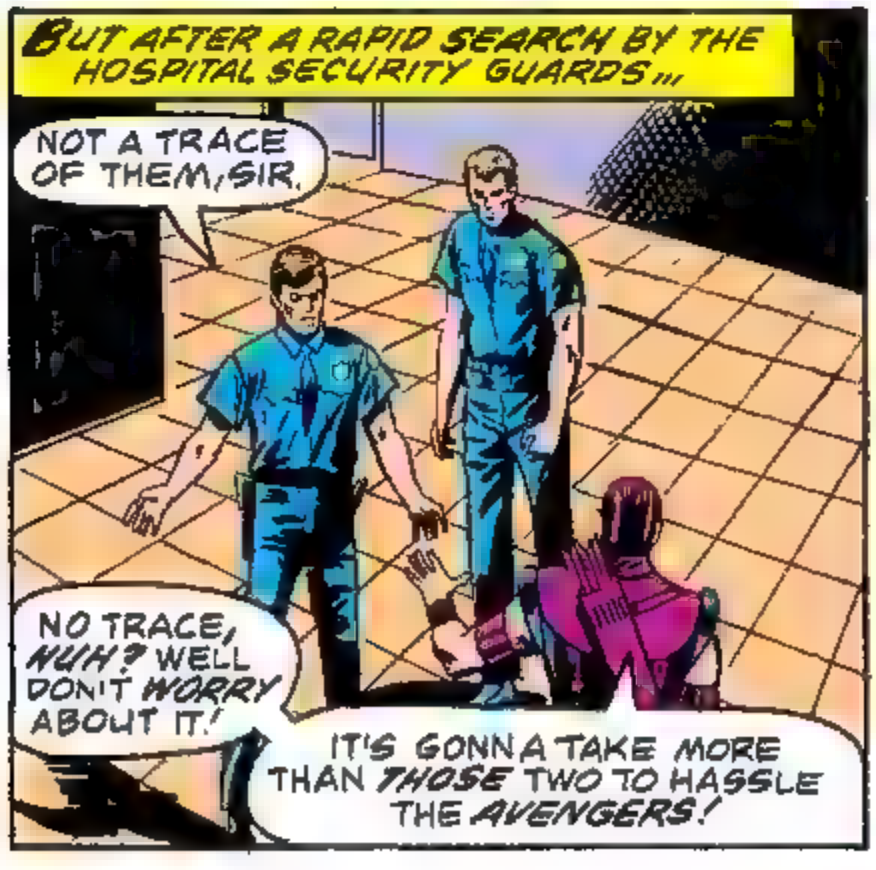
BADDIE NUMBER TWO GETS ONE OF MY SPECIALTY ITEMS:
ZAT
B13

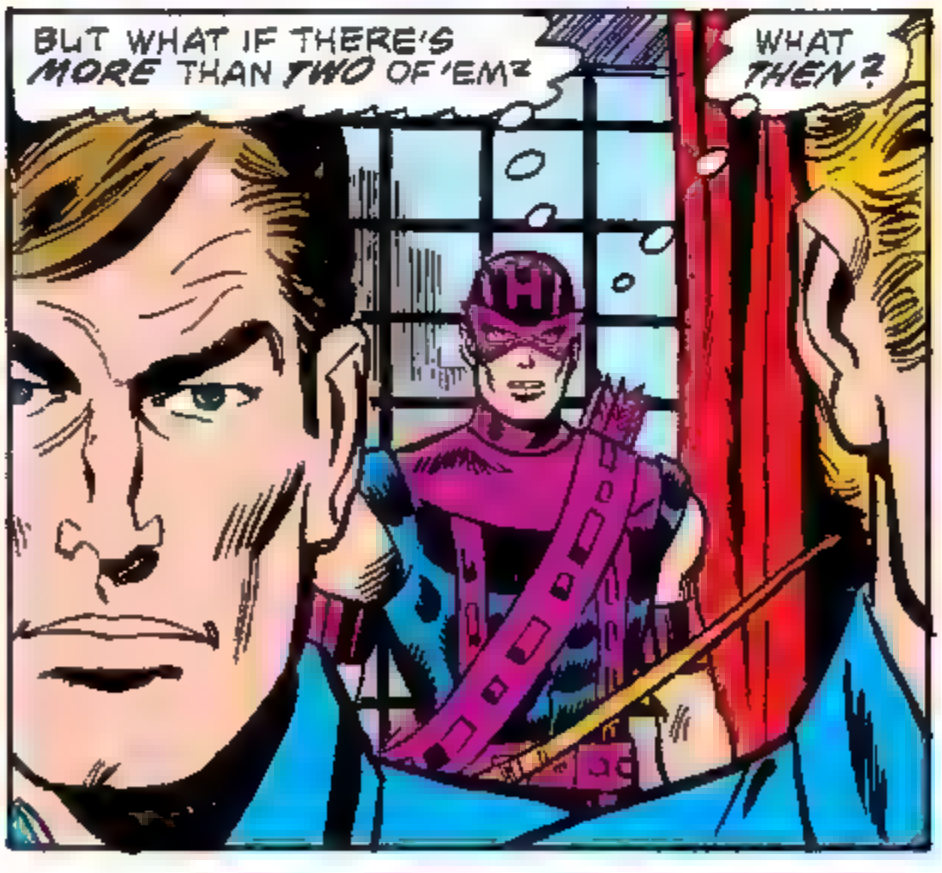
A THERMAL ARROW THAT WILL MAKE HIS HOT LITTLE HANDS--
SSSSSSS

YRGGH!
--EVEN MORE SO!


WE CAN'T RISK A PITCHED BATTLE NOW. IT WOULD THROW OFF OUR SCHEDULE!
COUGH... COUGH...
THIS SMOKE SCREEN WILL COVER OUR ESCAPE.

AND WHEN SAID SCREEN HAS LIFTED...
THEY'RE GONE -- FOR ALL THE GOOD IT'LL DO 'EM!
THOSE COSTUMES OF THEIRS ARE NOT EXACTLY WHAT I WOULD CALL DISCREET.


BUT AFTER A RAPID SEARCH BY THE HOSPITAL SECURITY GUARDS...
NOT A TRACE OF THEM, SIR.
NO TRACE, NUH? WELL DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
IT'S GONNA TAKE MORE THAN THOSE TWO TO HASSLE THE AVENGERS!


BUT WHAT IF THERE'S MORE THAN TWO OF 'EM?
WHAT THEN?

EVEN WHILE HAWKEYE CONSIDERS PROBABLE FUTURES, THE BEAST IS LIKEWISE LOST IN THOUGHT AS HE MAINTAINS A SOLEMN VIGIL OUTSIDE THEIR FALLEN TEAMMATE'S ROOM...

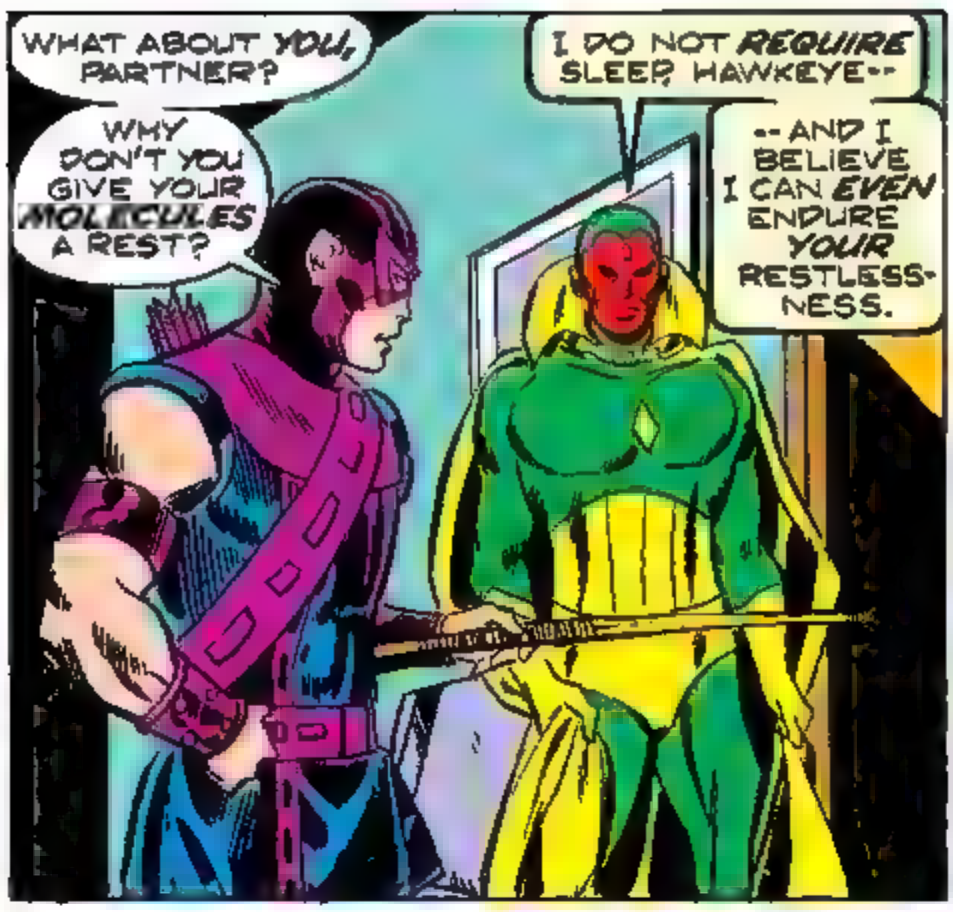
IT'S NOT HARD TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THOSE TWO HAVE ON THEIR MINDS. YOU JUST HAVE TO LOOK AT THEIR FACES!

THEY'RE EACH THINKING THAT IT COULD BE THE OTHER LYING IN THAT TINY ROOM RIGHT NOW.

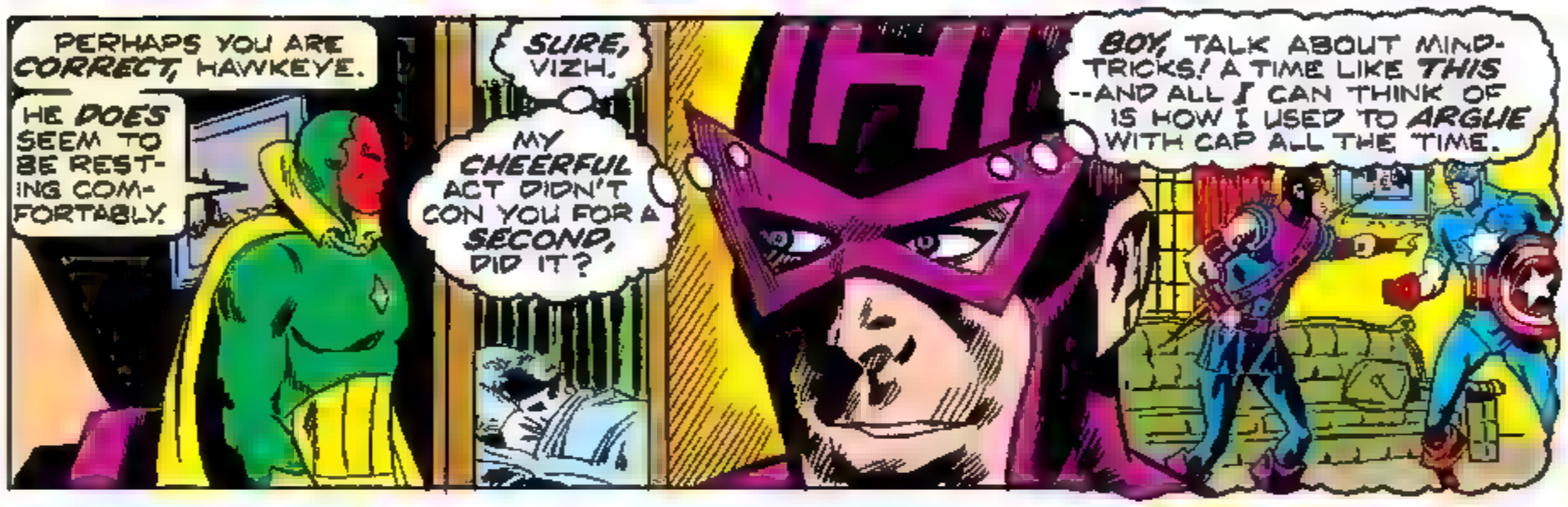
HE SHOWS NO SIGN OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS, DARLING.

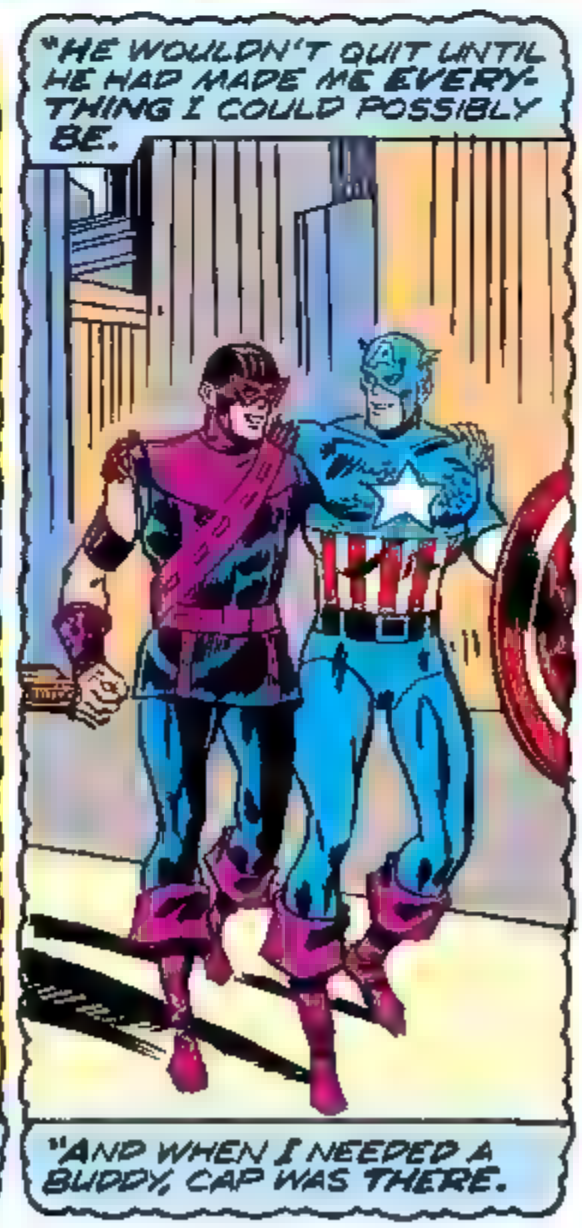
IT JUST CAN'T!


WHAT ABOUT YOU, PARTNER?
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE YOUR MOLECULES A REST?
I DO NOT REQUIRE SLEEP, HAWKEYE--
--AND I BELIEVE I CAN EVEN ENDURE YOUR RESTLESSNESS.

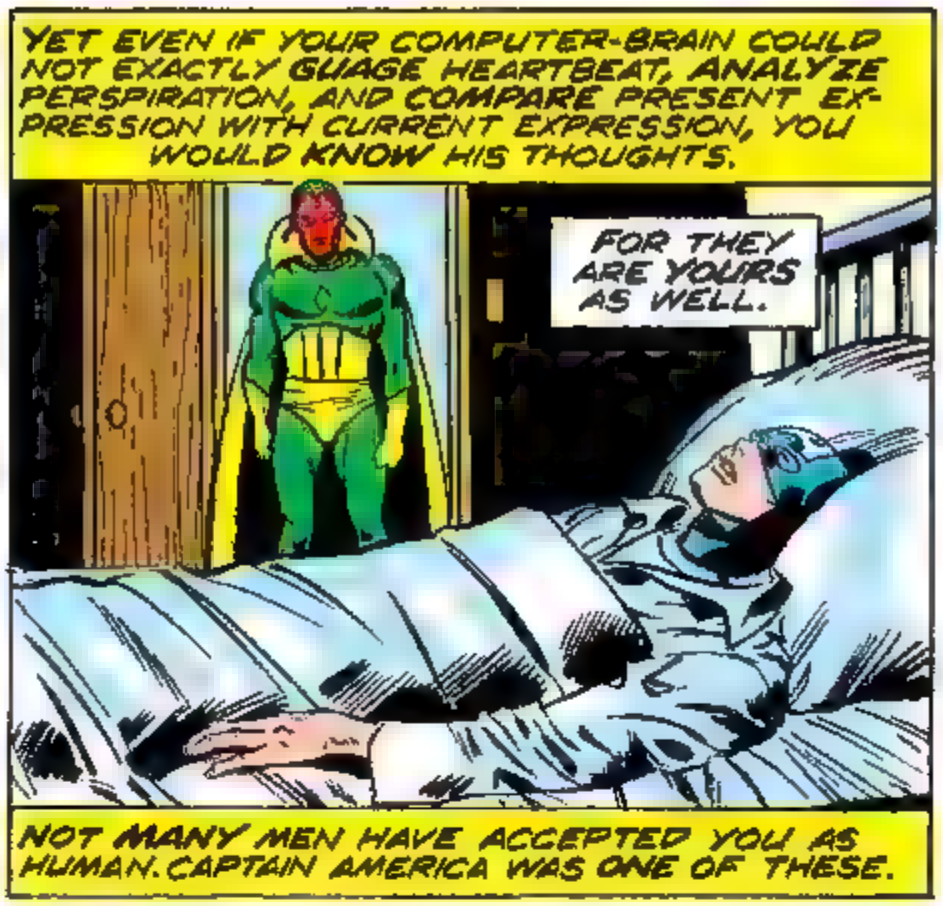
WAY TO GO, VIZH.
GLAD TO HAVE YOU ABOARD.
AND, LIKE I SAID, DON'T SWEAT ABOUT CAP.
OL' METHUSELAH IN THERE HAS MORE LIVES THAN A SABERTOOTH!

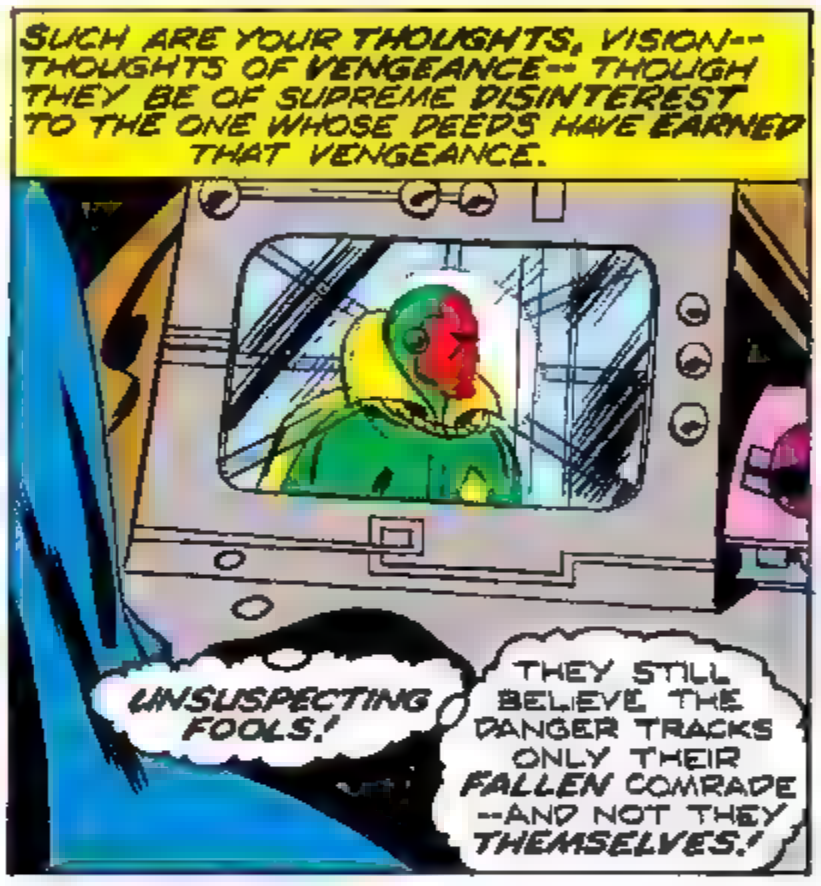

PERHAPS YOU ARE CORRECT, HAWKEYE.
HE DOES SEEM TO BE RESTING COMFORTABLY.
SURE, VIZH.
MY CHEERFUL ACT DIDN'T CON YOU FOR A SECOND, DID IT?
BOY, TALK ABOUT MIND-TRICKS! A TIME LIKE THIS --AND ALL I CAN THINK OF IS HOW I USED TO ARGUE WITH CAP ALL THE TIME.

"I WAS A HOT-HEADED EGO-TRIPPER THEN --MAYBE I HAVEN'T REALLY CHANGED. BUT DESPITE ALL THE DUMPING ON CAP I DID--
"--HE NEVER GAVE UP ON ME.
"HE TRAINED ME LIKE I WAS HIS BEST FRIEND.


"HE WOULDN'T QUIT UNTIL HE HAD MADE ME EVERYTHING I COULD POSSIBLY BE.
"AND WHEN I NEEDED A BUDDY, CAP WAS THERE.

"IT ALL ADDS UP TO ONE THING:
"CAP TURNED A SIDE-SHOW ARCHER INTO AN AVENGER!"





NEXT: THE ASSASSIN NEVER FAILS!

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS®

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF THE UNCANNY ASSASSIN!

"THE BETTER TO KILL THEM WITH!"

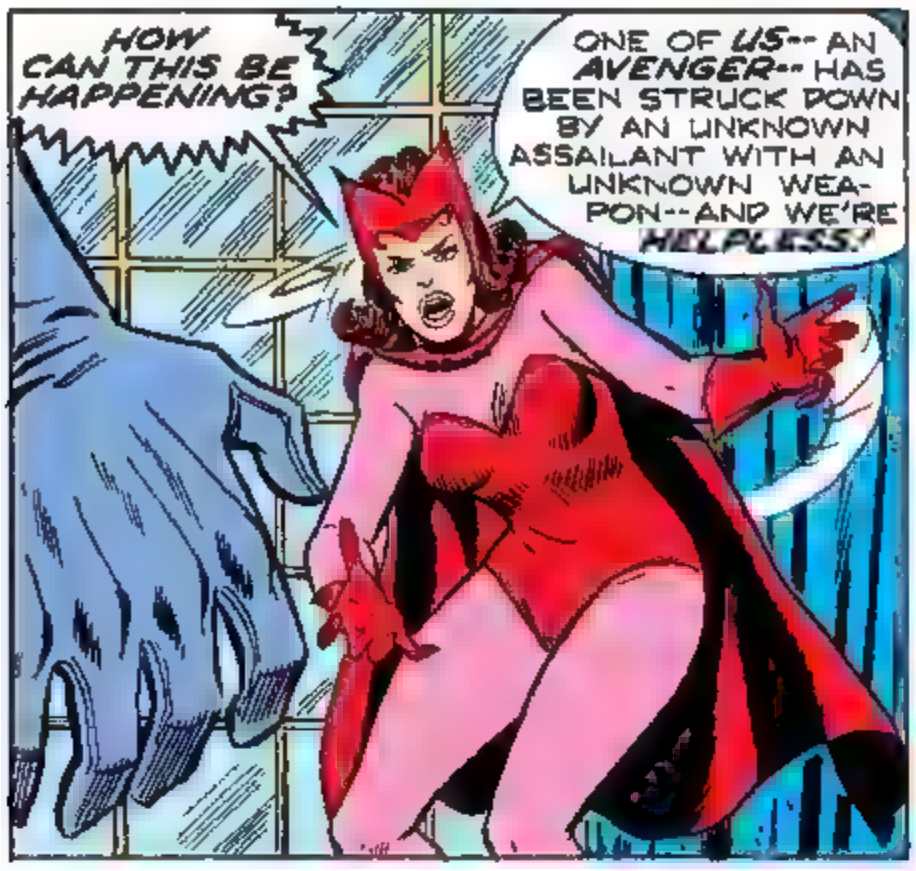
And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

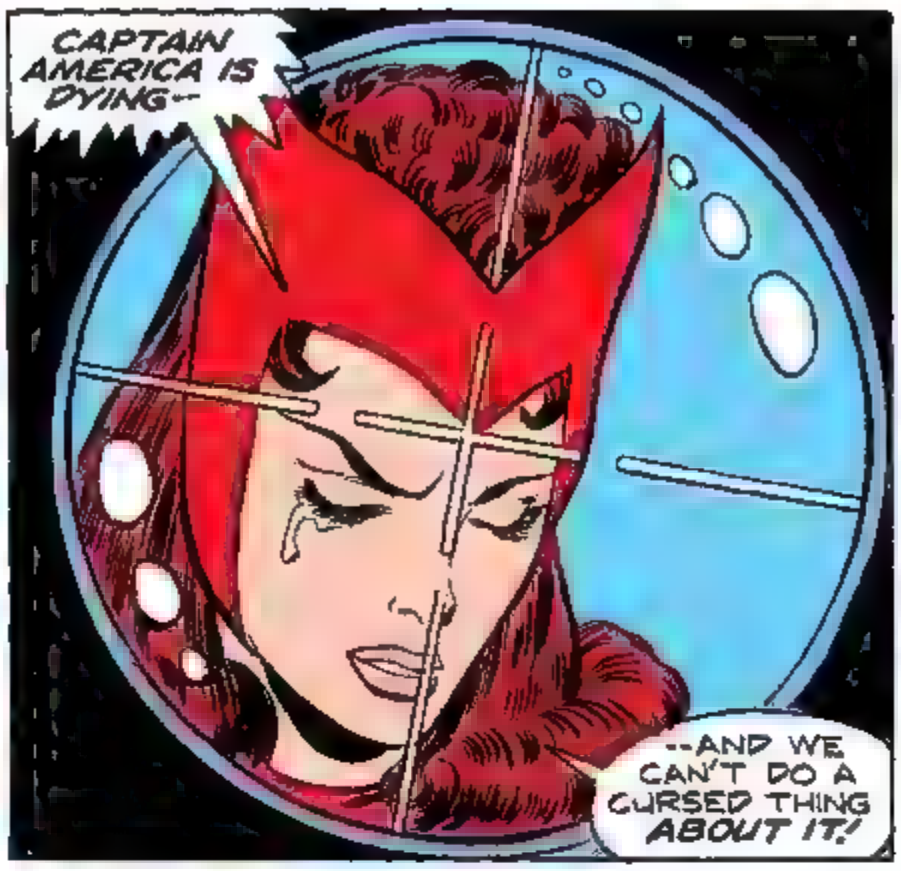
JV284

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! TM

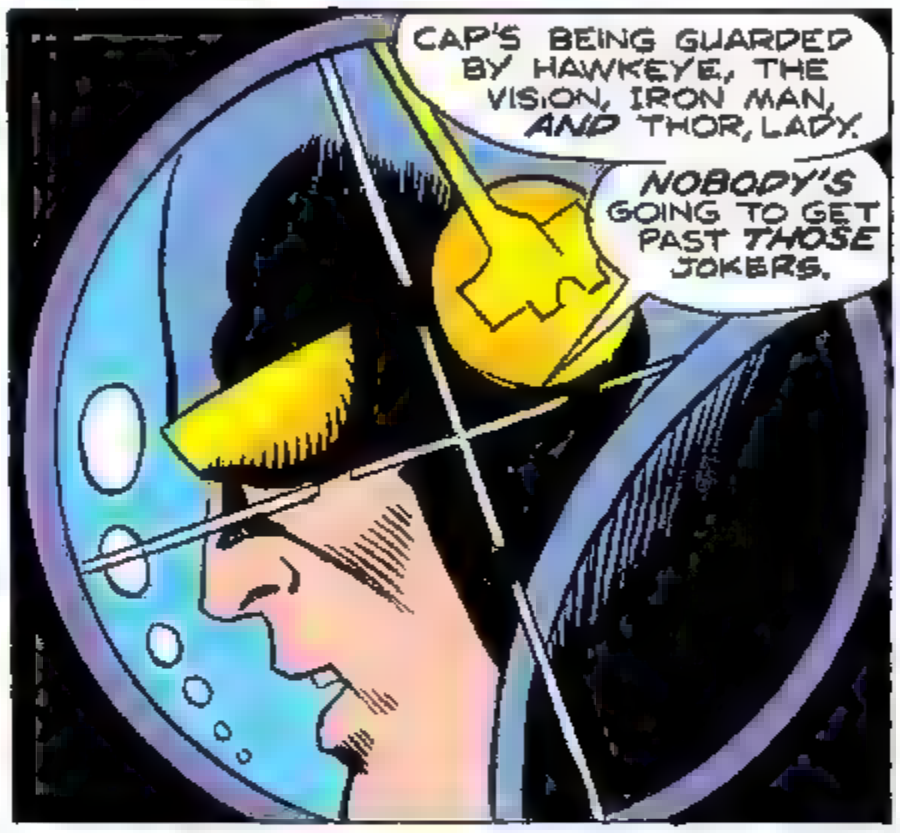
THE *EPIC CONCLUSION* OF LAST ISSUE'S FILL-IN FANTASY "*THE TAKING OF THE AVENGERS*" AS PRIDEFULLY PRODUCED BY

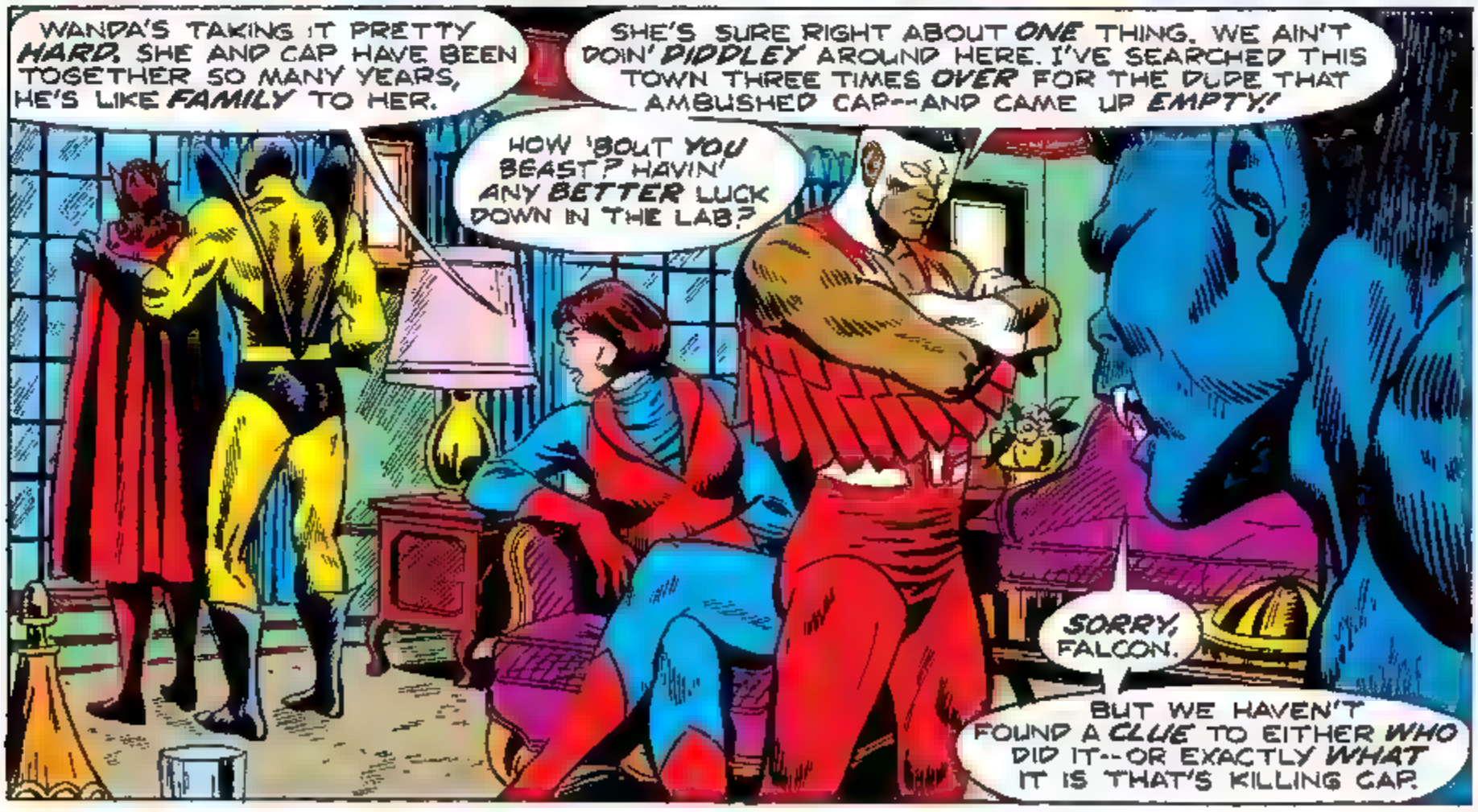
TONY ISABELLA GUEST WRITER | *KEITH POLLARD* (PAGES -3) & *DON HECK* (PAGES 6-32) GUEST PENCILLERS | *JOHN TARTAG* INKER | *DAVE H.* LETTERER, *PETRA G.* COLORIST | *MARV WOLFMAN* EDITOR


HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING?
ONE OF US-- AN AVENGER-- HAS BEEN STRUCK DOWN BY AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT WITH AN UNKNOWN WEAPON--AND WE'RE HELPLESS!


CAPTAIN AMERICA IS DYING--
--AND WE CAN'T DO A CURSED THING ABOUT IT!

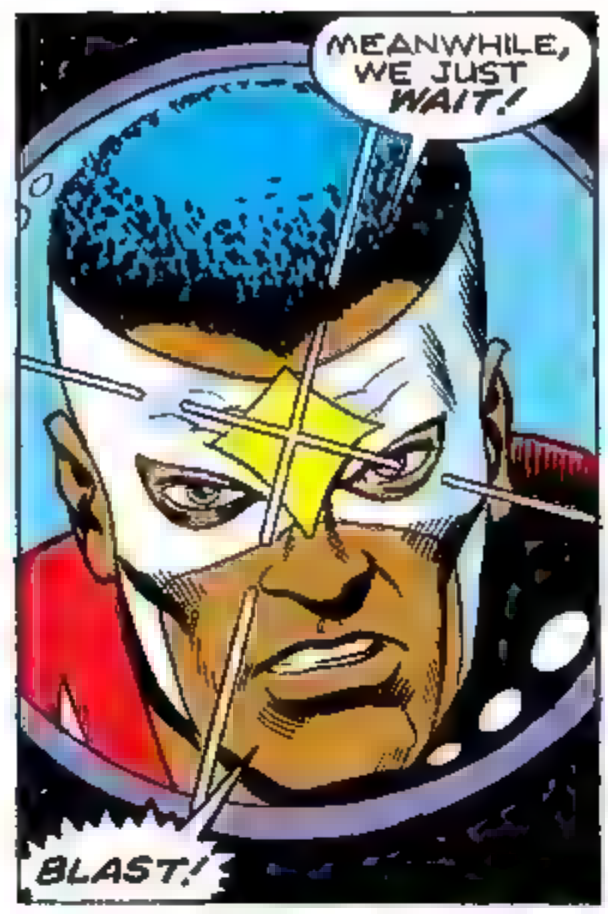
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, WANDA, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER THAT CAP'S COME THROUGH WORSE THAN THIS-- AND HE IS UNDER THE CARE OF DON BLAKE, WHO'S MAYBE THE WORLD'S FINEST SURGEON.
AND WHAT ABOUT THOSE MEN HAWKEYE BATTLED RIGHT IN THE HOSPITAL? WHOEVER'S BEHIND THIS ISN'T GOING TO GIVE UP UNTIL CAP IS DEAD!


CAP'S BEING GUARDED BY HAWKEYE, THE VISION, IRON MAN, AND THOR, LADY.
NOBODY'S GOING TO GET PAST THOSE JOKERS.


WANDA'S TAKING IT PRETTY HARD. SHE AND CAP HAVE BEEN TOGETHER SO MANY YEARS, HE'S LIKE FAMILY TO HER.
SHE'S SURE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING. WE AIN'T DOIN' DIDDLEY AROUND HERE. I'VE SEARCHED THIS TOWN THREE TIMES OVER FOR THE DUDE THAT AMBUSHED CAP--AND CAME UP EMPTY!
HOW 'BOUT YOU BEAST? HAVIN' ANY BETTER LUCK DOWN IN THE LAB?
SORRY, FALCON.
BUT WE HAVEN'T FOUND A CLUE TO EITHER WHO DID IT--OR EXACTLY WHAT IT IS THAT'S KILLING CAP.

IS THERE ANY HOPE, HANK?

SOME, JAN. REED RICHARDS IS WORKING ON THE THEORY THAT CAP WAS PUT AWAY BY A NEW FORM OF RADIATION POISONING.
AND IN L.A., BILL FOSTER IS WORKING FROM THE BIOCHEMICAL ANGLE ...USING WHAT LITTLE DATA WE COULD SEND HIM.

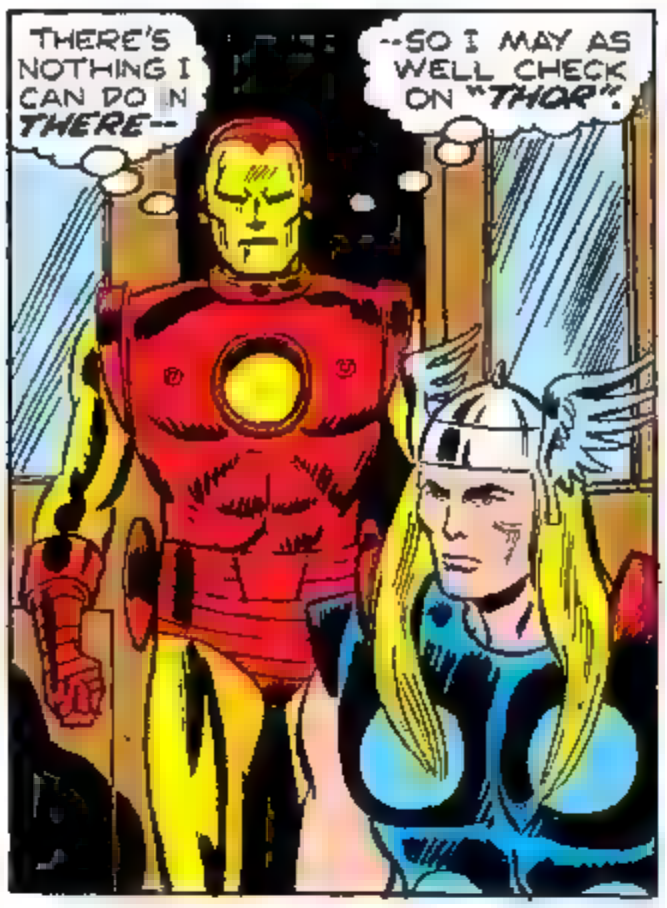

MEANWHILE, WE JUST WAIT!
BLAST!

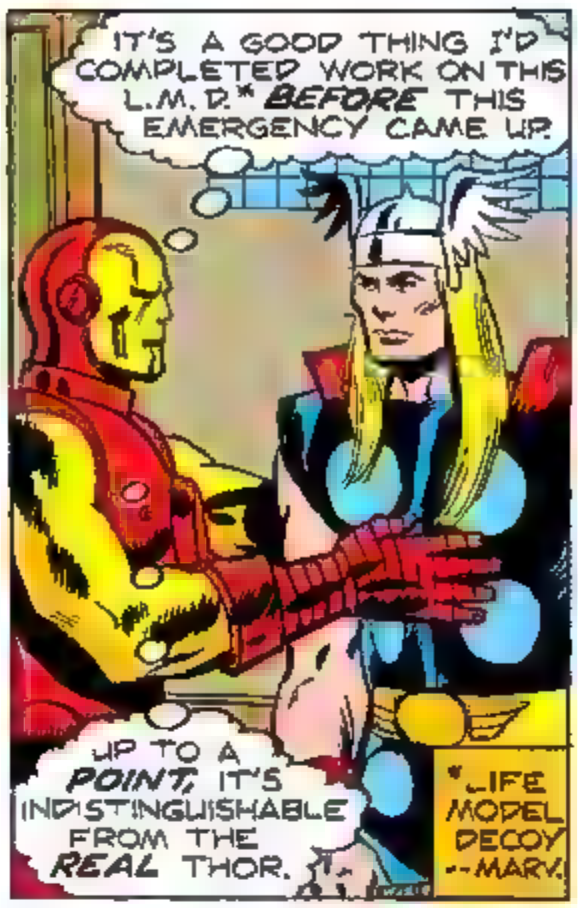
THE PLAN IS WORKING TO PERFECTION!
THE AVENGERS ARE SO CONCERNED ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA THAT THEY'VE LET THEIR OWN DEFENSES DOWN.

AGENT 2-C, RADIO THE ASSASSIN THAT THE SQUAD IS IN POSITION AND AWAITING FURTHER ORDERS.
WE'LL CONTINUE TO TRACK THE TARGETS THROUGH OUR SCOPES.

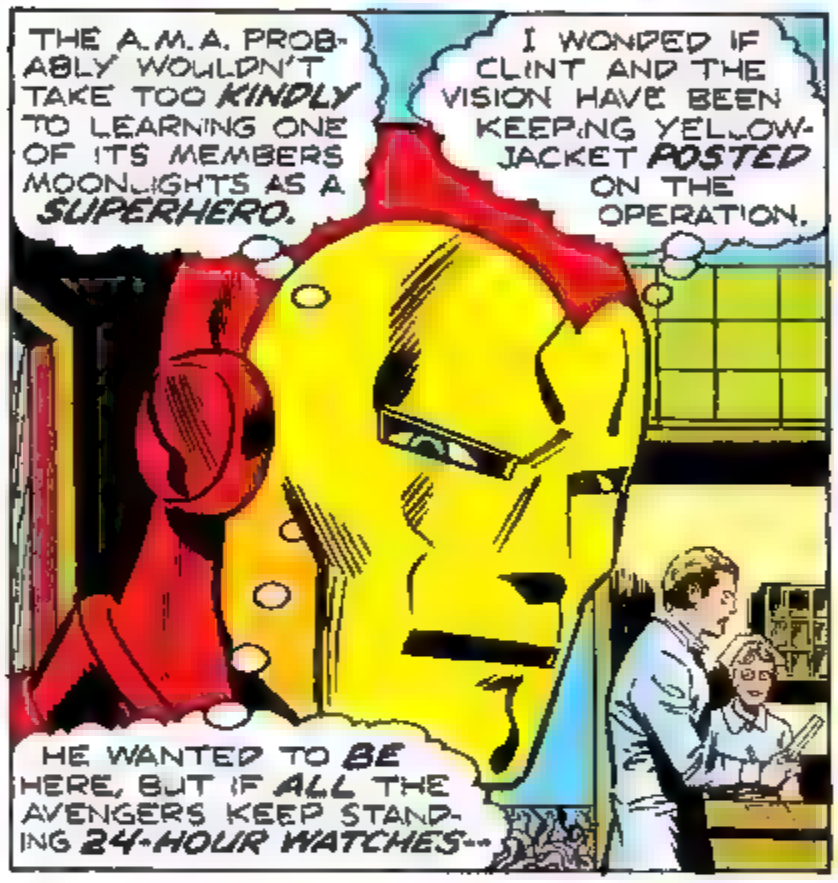
ATTENTION "C" SQUAD. ON RECEIPT OF NOTIFICATION THAT MAIN TARGETS HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED, REMOVE THE SECONDARY TARGETS AS FEASIBLE.
YOU WILL THEN JOIN RANKS WITH "D" SQUAD FOR FINAL MOPPING-UP OPERATIONS.
ALL TARGETS ARE TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR.
NOT A SINGLE AVENGER MUST REMAIN ALIVE.
END CHAPTER ONE

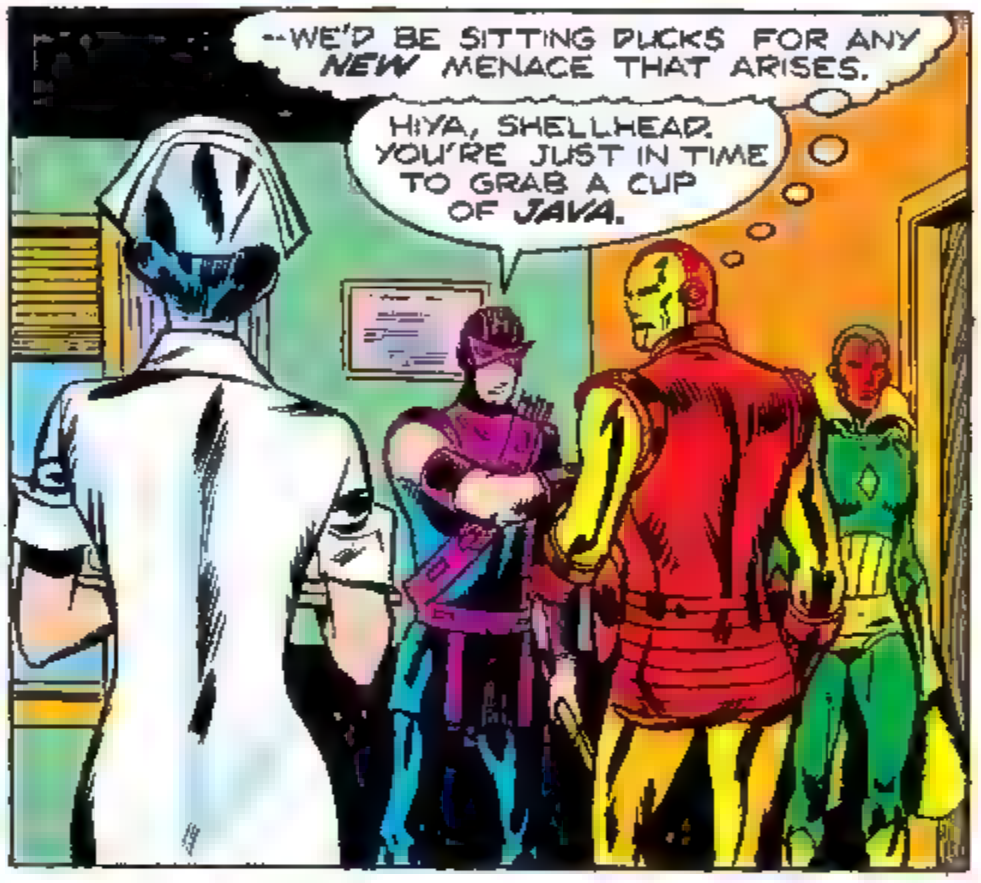
THE BETTER TO KILL THEM WITH!
THE OPERATING THEATER IS APTLY NAMED.
FOR IT IS A STAGE ON WHICH DOCTOR DON BLAKE PERFORMS WITH ALL THE SKILL HE CAN MUSTER, ESSAYING A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE DRAMA UNFOLDING THERE.
THE BATTLE FOR A HUMAN LIFE!
PULSE AND RESPIRATION ARE HOLDING STEADY, DOCTOR BLAKE-- --BUT AT DANGEROUSLY LOW LEVELS.
THIS OPERATION COULD KILL HIM.
THERE'S NO ALTERNATIVE, DOCTOR. REED RICHARDS IS CONVINCED OUR PATIENT HAS BEEN..CHARGED WITH SOME UNKNOWN FORM OF RADIATION, AND IT'S CAUSING HIS BODY TO SLOWLY TURN ITSELF OFF!
THE ONLY WAY TO DISSIPATE THE LETHAL ENERGY IS BY PLACING THESE COUNTER-RADIATION CAPSULES INSIDE THE PATIENT.
CHAPTER 2
THANK HEAVEN DON BLAKE IS PERFORMING THE OPERATION.
THERE'S NOT ANOTHER SURGEON ALIVE CAPABLE OF SUCH DELICATE WORK.


THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO IN THERE--
--SO I MAY AS WELL CHECK ON "THOR".


IT'S A GOOD THING I'D COMPLETED WORK ON THIS L.M.D.* BEFORE THIS EMERGENCY CAME UP.
UP TO A POINT, IT'S INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE REAL THOR.
*LIFE MODEL DECOY --MARV.

IT'S ALREADY FAR TOO COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN BLAKE AND THE THUNDER GOD.
HOPEFULLY, THIS WILL PREVENT ANYONE FROM DISCOVERING JUST HOW CLOSE A CONNECTION.


THE A.M.A. PROBABLY WOULDN'T TAKE TOO KINDLY TO LEARNING ONE OF ITS MEMBERS MOONLIGHTS AS A SUPERHERO.
I WONDED IF CLINT AND THE VISION HAVE BEEN KEEPING YELLOW-JACKET POSTED ON THE OPERATION.
HE WANTED TO BE HERE, BUT IF ALL THE AVENGERS KEEP STANDING 24-HOUR WATCHES--


--WE'D BE SITTING DUCKS FOR ANY NEW MENACE THAT ARISES.
HIYA, SHELLHEAD. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO GRAB A CUP OF JAVA.

IT'S NOT THE GREATEST COFFEE IN THE WORLD, GENTLEMEN, BUT IT'S HOT--AND THAT'S SOMEHTING AT LEAST.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT REMOVING YOUR MASK, IRON MAN. I REMEMBERED TO BRING A STRAW FOR YOU.

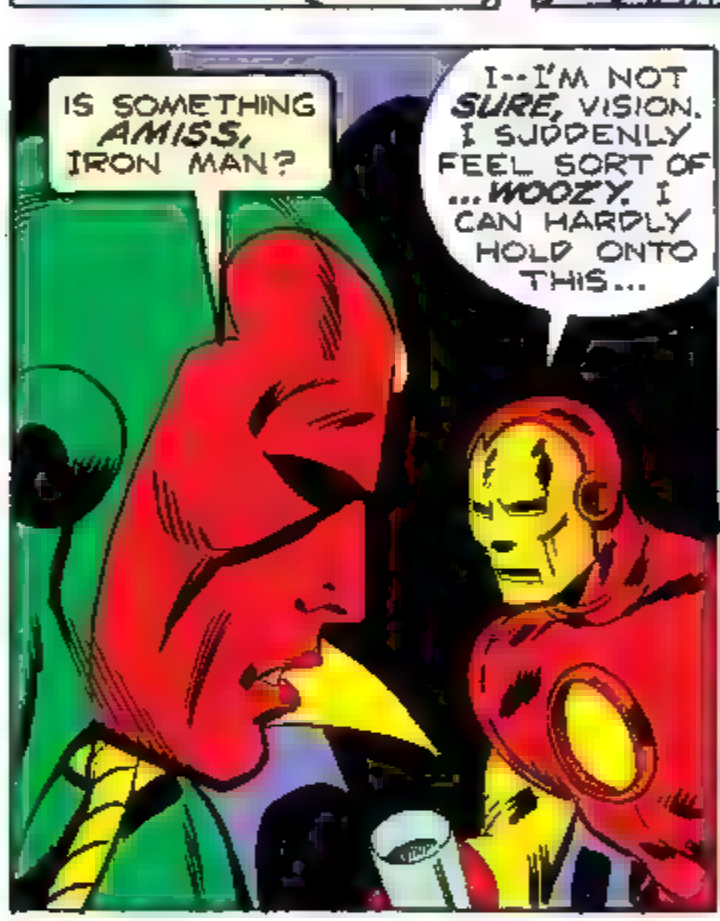
DOESN'T THE VISION DRINK?
HE CAN, MISS--
--BUT I'M AFRAID IT'S THE FURTHEST THING FROM HIS MIND RIGHT NOW.

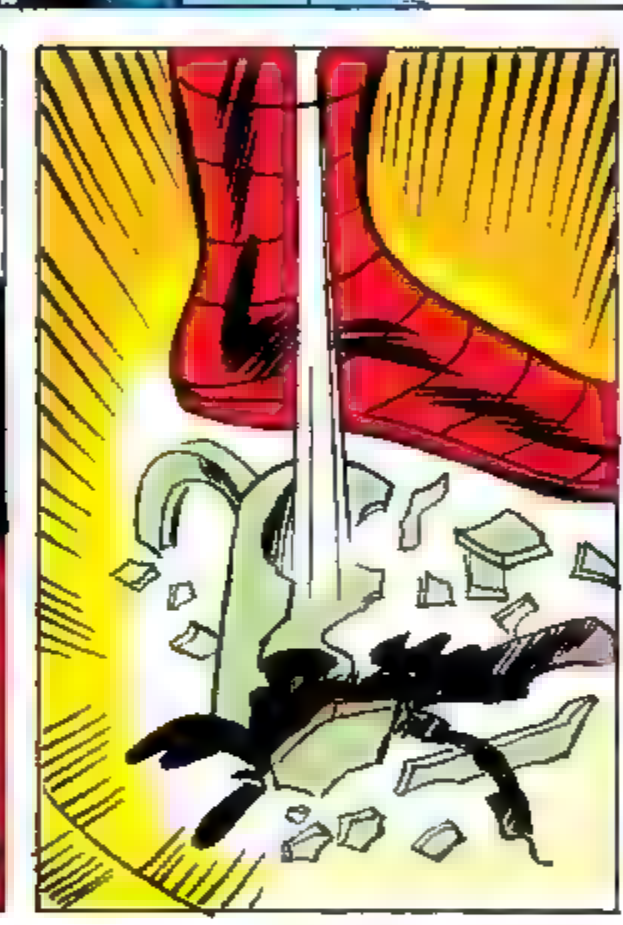
YOU HEAR IRON MAN'S WORDS, ACCEPTING THE TRUTH OF THEM. YOUR THOUGHTS LIE SOLELY WITH THE OPERATION BEING CARRIED OUT A SCANT FLOOR AWAY.
ONLY ONCE IN YOUR LIFE HAVE YOU BEEN OPERATED ON-- AND THAT TIME YOU VERY NEARLY PERISHED.*
*ISSUE #113--M.

YOU-- A BEING OF STURDY SYNTHETIC CREATION-- VERY NEARLY PERISHED. WHAT THEN THE CHANCES FOR AN ALL-TOO-HUMAN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SURVIVAL?
ENJOY YOUR COFFEE, AVENGERS
I'LL BE BACK LATER.

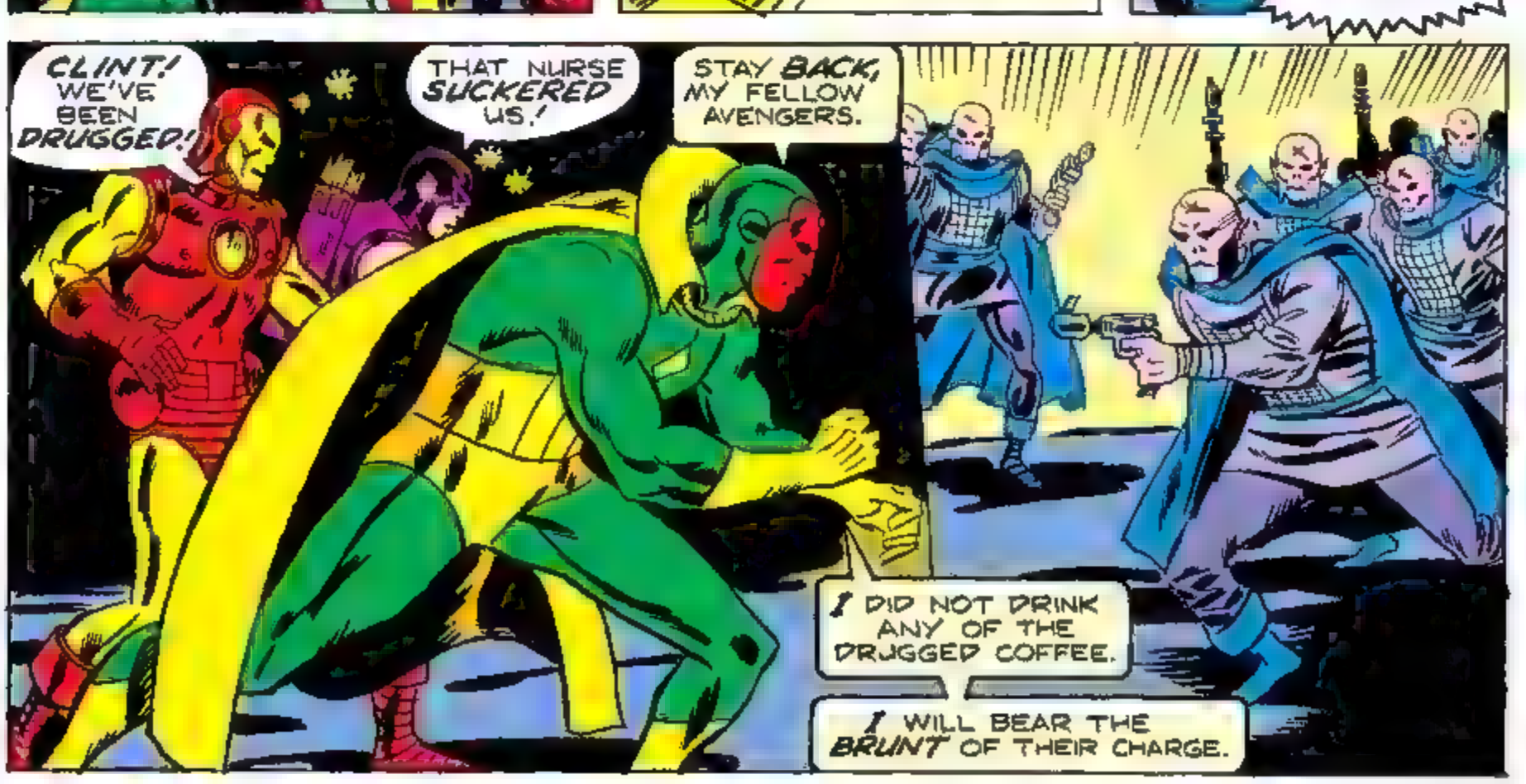
HAWKEYE AND IRON MAN ARE DRINKING THE COFFEE NOW. IT SHOULD START TO AFFECT THEM IN SECONDS!
"B" SQUAD-- PREPARE FOR COMBAT!

BROTHER, IS THIS COFFEE EVER EL STINKO!
THIS MUST BE HOW THEY RECRUIT NEW PATIENTS!


IS SOMETHING AMISS, IRON MAN?
I--I'M NOT SURE, VISION. I SUDDENLY FEEL SORT OF ...WOOZY. I CAN HARDLY HOLD ONTO THIS...



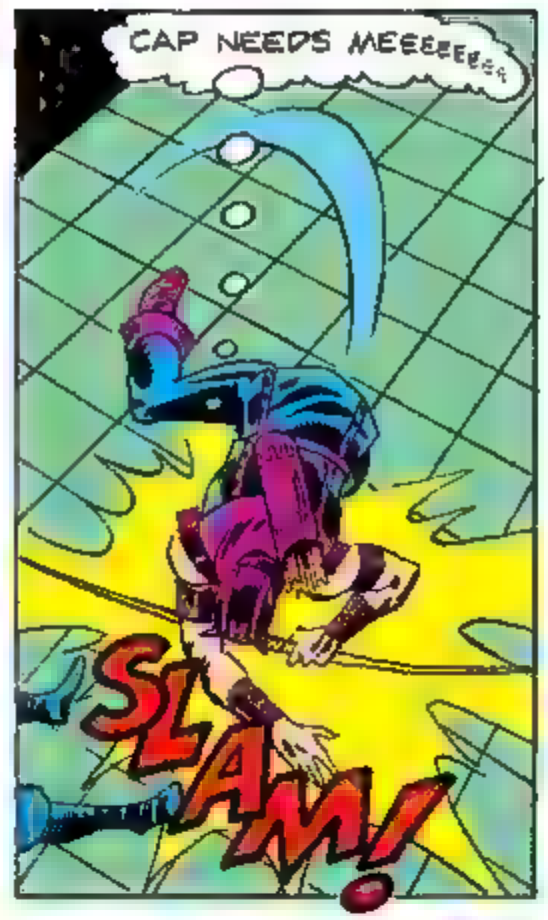
IT'S WORKING! "B" SQUAD...
ATTACK!

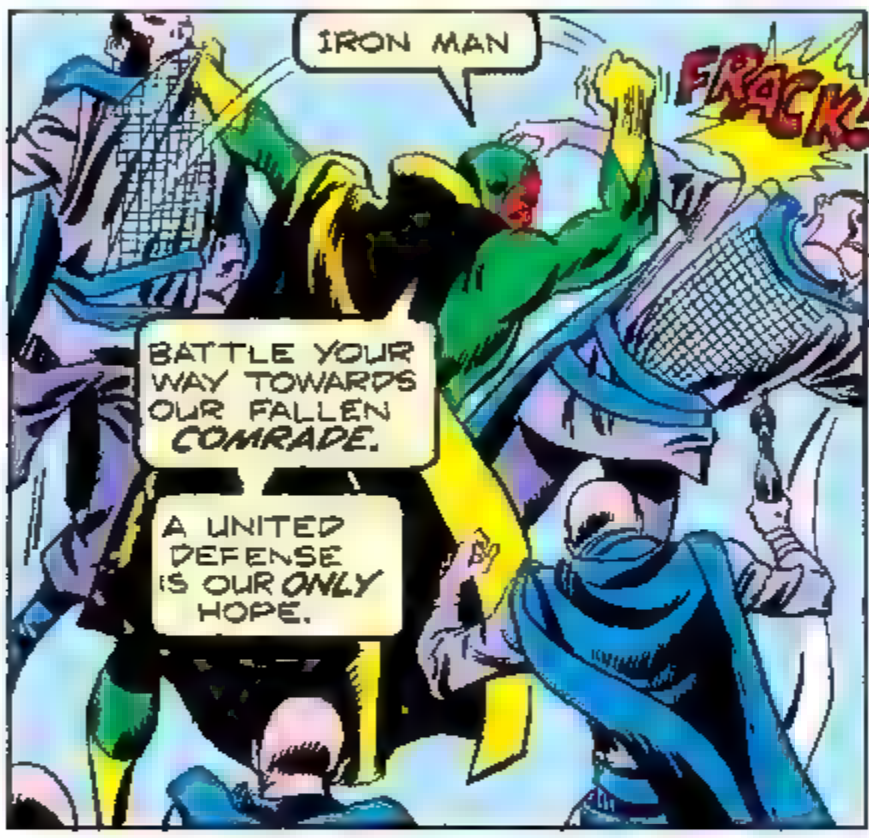

CLINT! WE'VE BEEN DRUGGED!
THAT NURSE SUCKERED US!
STAY BACK, MY FELLOW AVENGERS.
I DID NOT DRINK ANY OF THE DRUGGED COFFEE.
I WILL BEAR THE BRUNT OF THEIR CHARGE.

GREAT PLAN, VIZH.
EXCEPT THAT THESE GOONS ARE CHARGIN' FROM MORE THAN ONE DIRECTION!

ARRR... MY GUTS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE BEING ROASTED OVER AN OPEN FIRE!
BUT I CAN'T PASS OUT NOW!

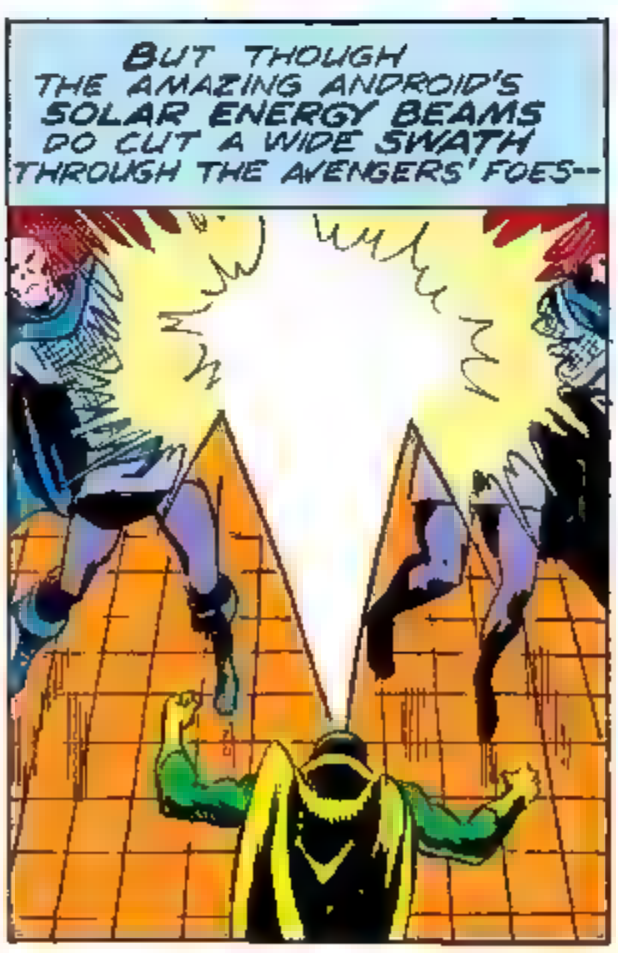
CAP NEEDS ME!


CAP NEEDS MEEEEEEE
SLAM!


IRON MAN
FRACK!
BATTLE YOUR WAY TOWARDS OUR FALLEN COMRADE.
A UNITED DEFENSE IS OUR ONLY HOPE.

CAN HARDLY HEAR HIM. AND ALL MY OTHER SENSES ARE RUNNING WILD AS WELL!
ZZRK!

FACE IT, MISTER. YOU'RE OUT ON YOUR FEET! IF THE VISION CAN'T TAKE THESE CREEPS ALONE--
--WE'VE HAD IT!


BUT THOUGH THE AMAZING ANDROID'S SOLAR ENERGY BEAMS DO CUT A WIDE SWATH THROUGH THE AVENGERS' FOES--

--THEIR ATTACKERS' GREATER NUMBERS SEEM LIKELY TO PROVE AN INSURMOUNTABLE DISADVANTAGE.
HE DOESN'T SEE US, B-7.
THEN STRIKE SWIFTLY, B-9.

GAS!
FOOSH!
THEY SPRAYED IT INTO MY MASK BEFORE I COULD ACTIVATE MY EYE-AND-MOUTH SHIELDS!

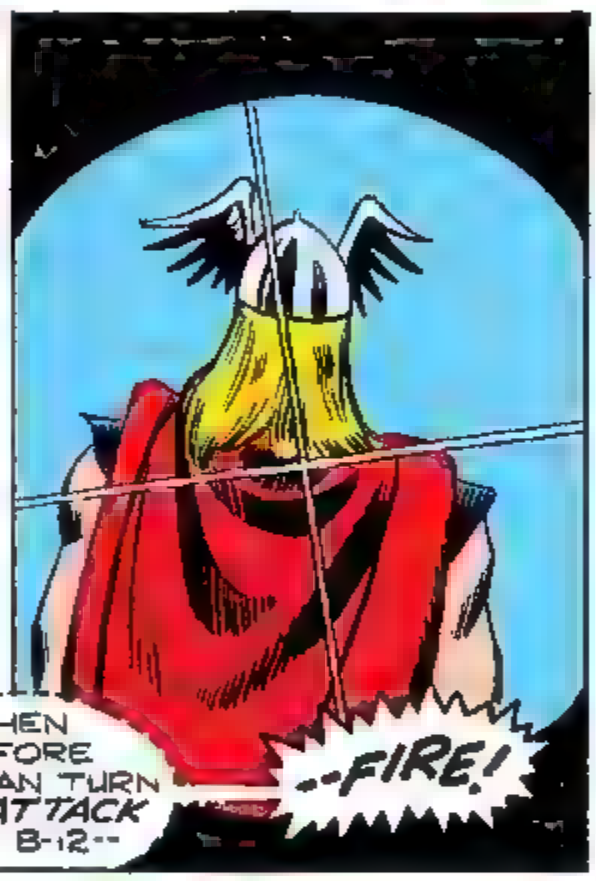
HE'S DOWN!

OF COURSE! IN HIS ALREADY-WEAKENED CONDITION HE COULD NOT HELP BUT BE INSTANTLY OVERCOME BY THE GAS!

THREE OF OUR PRIMARY TARGETS HAVE NOW BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR

AND WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE STILL-BATTLING ANDROID AND THOR--

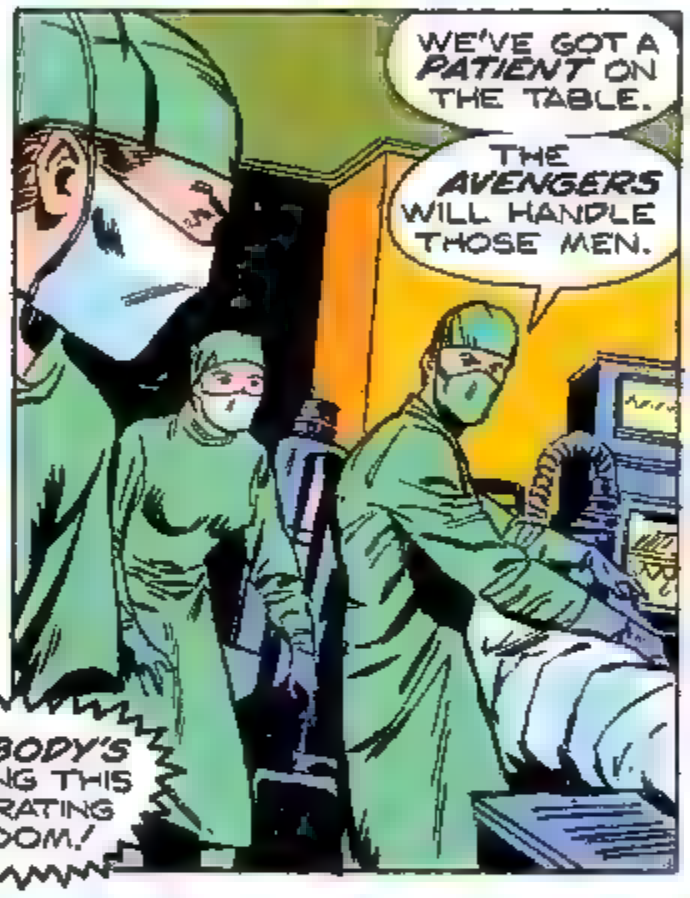
--THIS PHASE OF THE ASSASSIN'S PLAN WILL HAVE BEEN COMPLETED!



HE--HE'S NOT BREATHING!
IS IT POSSIBLE?
CAN WE HAVE SLAIN A GOD?

OH DEAR LORD! THOSE COSTUMED MEN...
THEY'VE JUST KILLED THOR!
IT CAN'T BE! BUT HE LOOKS SO STILL--SO LIFELESS!
LOCK THE DOOR IMMEDIATELY, NURSE ROBINSON. MAYBE WE CAN BUY ENOUGH TIME TO FINISH THIS OPERATION!

WE'VE GOT TO CALL THE GUARDS!
NOBODY'S LEAVING THIS OPERATING ROOM!


WE'VE GOT A PATIENT ON THE TABLE.
THE AVENGERS WILL HANDLE THOSE MEN.

BUT CAN THEY? TONY STARK DOESN'T BUILD FRAGILE ROBOTS--AND THEY TOOK IT OUT WITH ONE SHOT! THOR'D BE TORN BETWEEN STAYING HERE OR GOING TO WARN THE OTHERS RIGHT NOW.
FOR DOCTOR DON BLAKE THOUGH, THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE CHOICE--
--AND HEAVEN HELP ME IF IT PROVES TO BE THE WRONG CHOICE!

AND WHILE ONE AVENGER WRESTLES WITH HIS DUAL IDENTITIES, ANOTHER FIGHTS ON--
WHUMP!
FWAK!
--AGAINST A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS SEA OF ENEMIES.

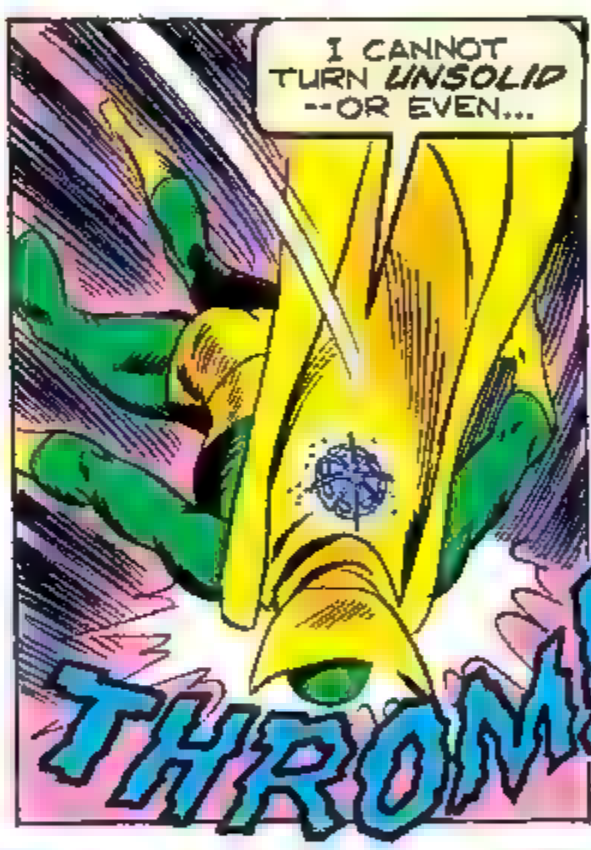
BUT EVEN A BEING WHO CAN INCREASE HIS DENSITY TO ROUGHLY THAT OF A DIAMOND--
AAAHHRRR!
--OR BECOME UNSOLID ENOUGH TO ATTACK HIS FOES FROM WITHIN--

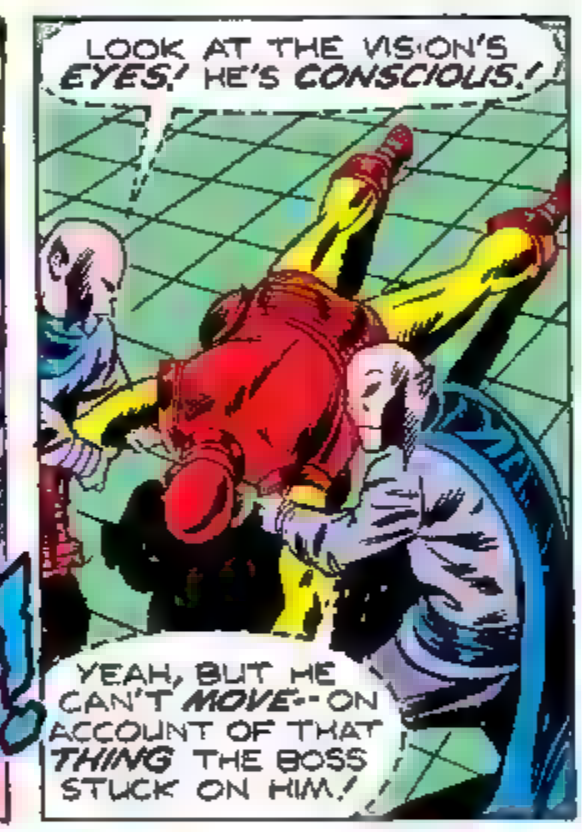
--NO MATTER HOW VALIANTLY HE BATTLES ON--
BRRZZ
--CAN SUCCESSFULLY WAGE WAR--

--ON TWO FRONTS!
PERFECT! MY MEN HAVE MANEUVERED THE VISION INTO POSITION--
--AND HE HAS TURNED DIAMOND-HARD TO AVOID SUCCUMBING TO THEIR BLAST-WEAPONS!

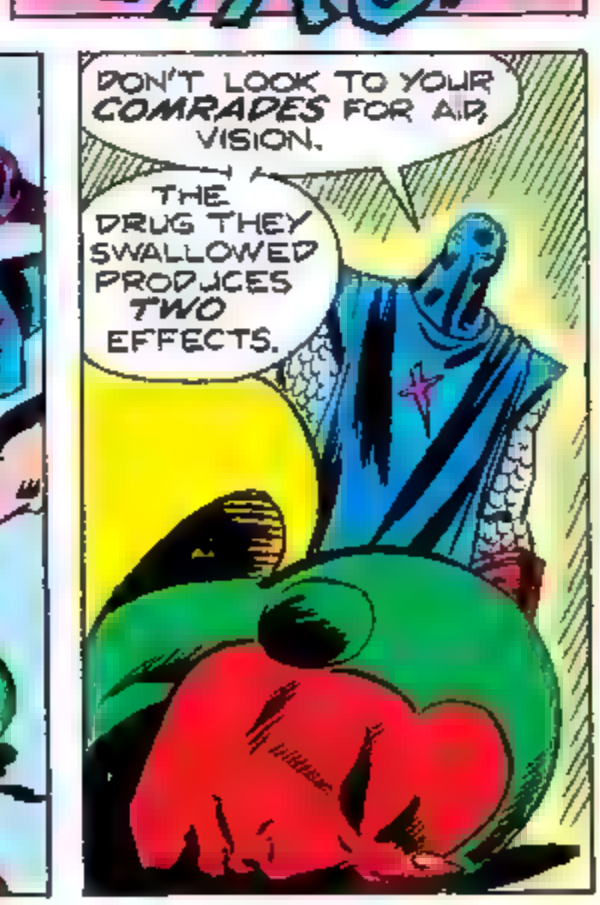
WHICH MAKES HIM VULNERABLE TO THE DEVICE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO DESTROY HIM!
SLAPP!
WHA--?
SOME REAR ATTACKER HAS FASTENED AN OBJECT TO MY CLOAK! BUT BEFORE IT CAN SERVE ITS DIABOLICAL FUNCTION, I'LL--

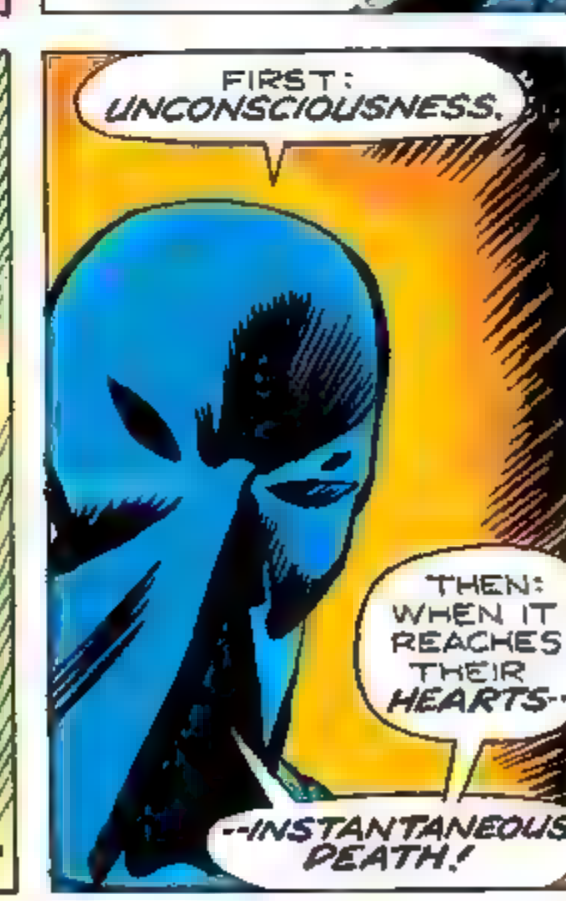
NO!
MY BODY DOES NOT RESPOND TO MY MENTAL COMMANDS!

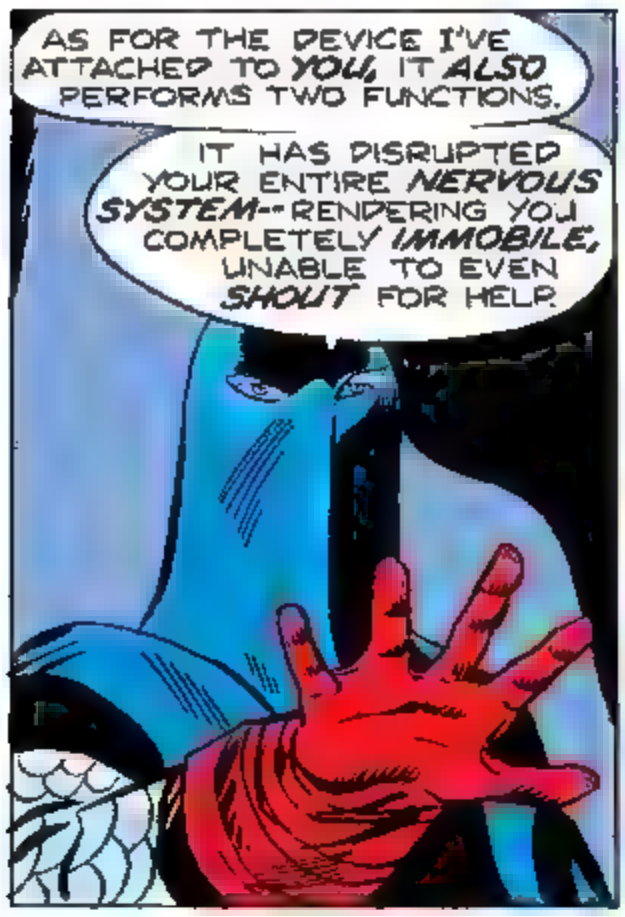

I CANNOT TURN UNSOLID --OR EVEN...
THROM!

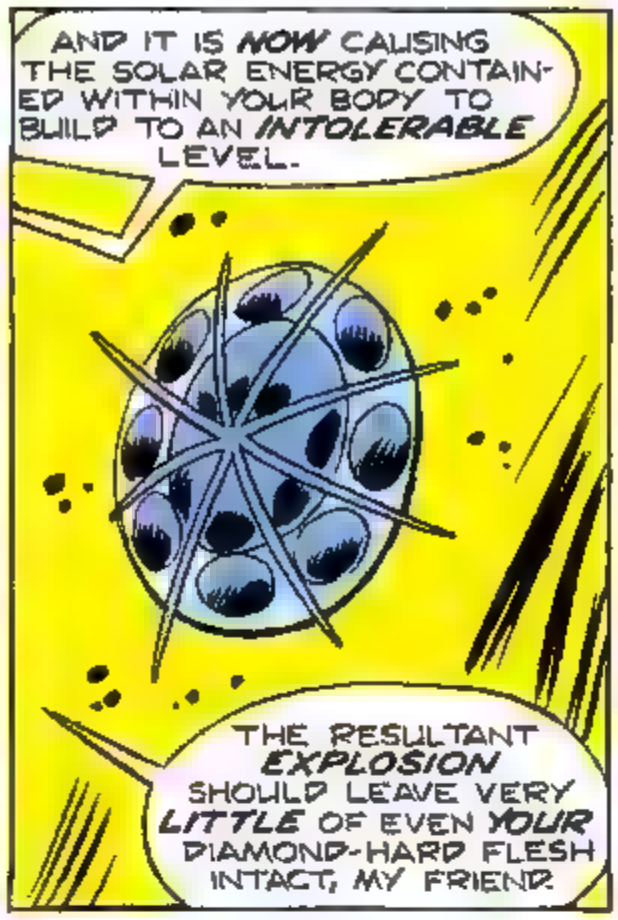

LOOK AT THE VISION'S EYES! HE'S CONSCIOUS!
YEAH, BUT HE CAN'T MOVE--ON ACCOUNT OF THAT THING THE BOSS STUCK ON HIM!

THESE MEN HAVE SHARED COUNTLESS ADVENTURES
IT IS ONLY FITTING THEY DIE TOGETHER.


DON'T LOOK TO YOUR COMRADES FOR AID, VISION.
THE DRUG THEY SWALLOWED PRODUCES TWO EFFECTS.

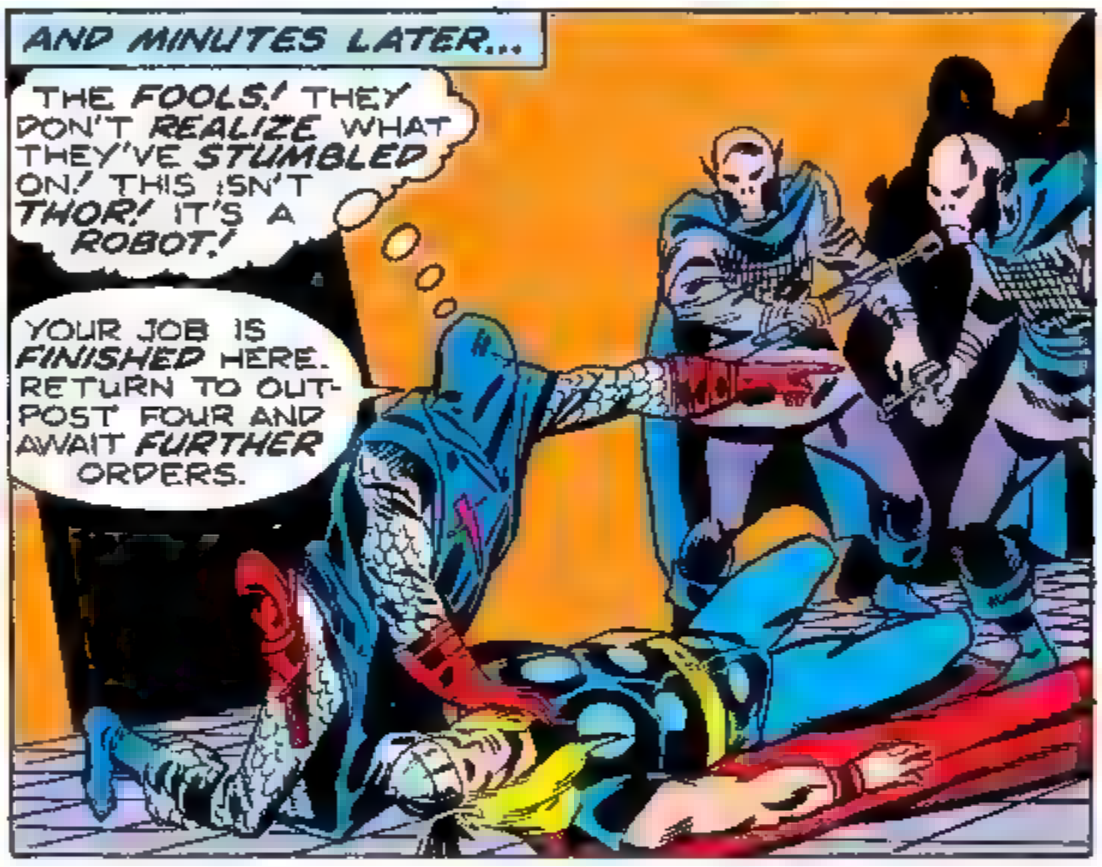

FIRST: UNCONSCIOUSNESS.
THEN: WHEN IT REACHES THEIR HEARTS--
--INSTANTANEOUS DEATH!

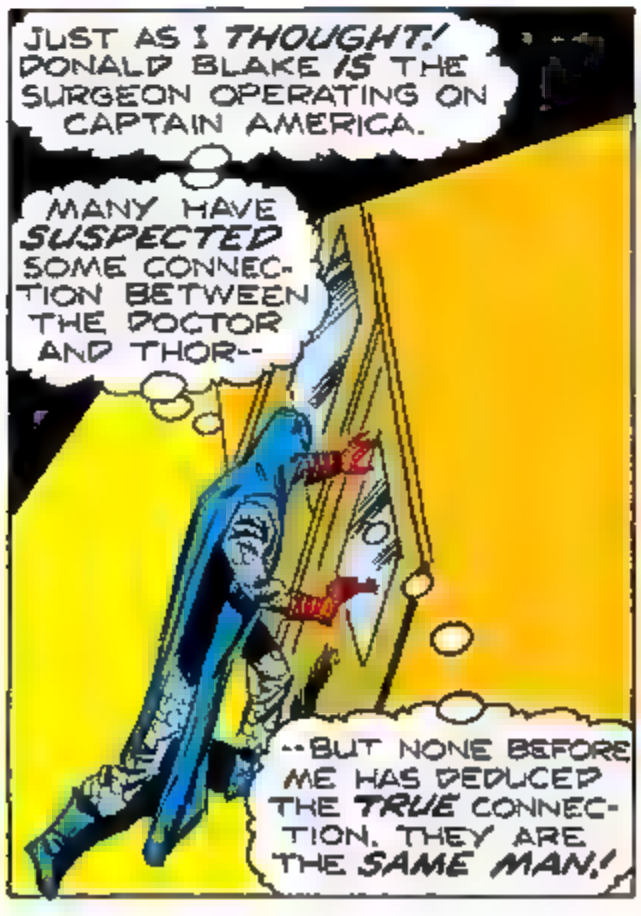

AS FOR THE DEVICE I'VE ATTACHED TO YOU, IT ALSO PERFORMS TWO FUNCTIONS.
IT HAS DISRUPTED YOUR ENTIRE NERVOUS SYSTEM--RENDERING YOU COMPLETELY IMMOBILE, UNABLE TO EVEN SHOUT FOR HELP.


AND IT IS NOW CAUSING THE SOLAR ENERGY CONTAINED WITHIN YOUR BODY TO BUILD TO AN INTOLERABLE LEVEL.
THE RESULTANT EXPLOSION SHOULD LEAVE VERY LITTLE OF EVEN YOUR DIAMOND-HARD FLESH INTACT, MY FRIEND.

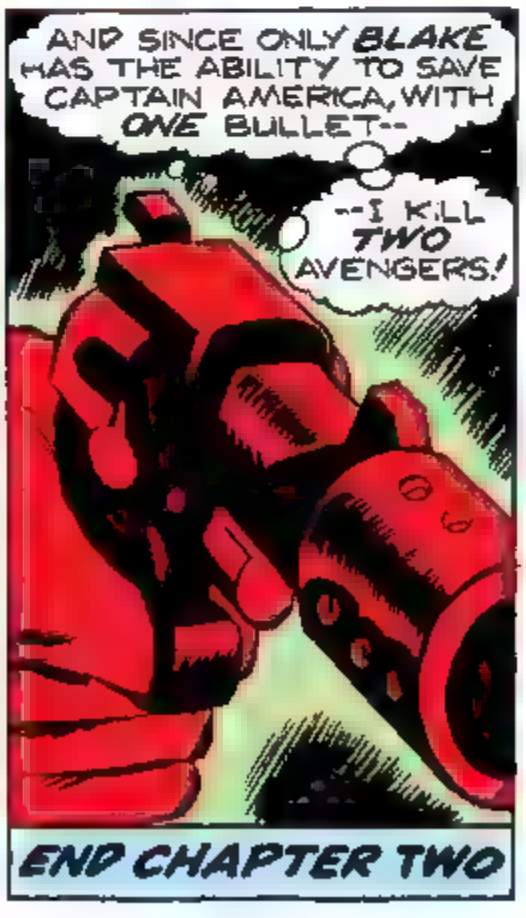
YOU MIGHT WISH TO AMUSE YOURSELF IN YOUR FINAL MOMENTS BY TRYING TO CALCULATE WHICH WILL KILL YOUR ALLIES FIRST:
THE POISON--OR YOUR OWN EXPLODING BODY!

ASSASSIN! WE'VE JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM B-12!
HE--HE SAYS THEY'VE KILLED THOR!
WITH THEIR BLAST-WEAPONS!
WHAT?


AND MINUTES LATER...
THE FOOLS! THEY DON'T REALIZE WHAT THEY'VE STUMBLED ON! THIS ISN'T THOR! IT'S A ROBOT!
YOUR JOB IS FINISHED HERE. RETURN TO OUTPOST FOUR AND AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS.

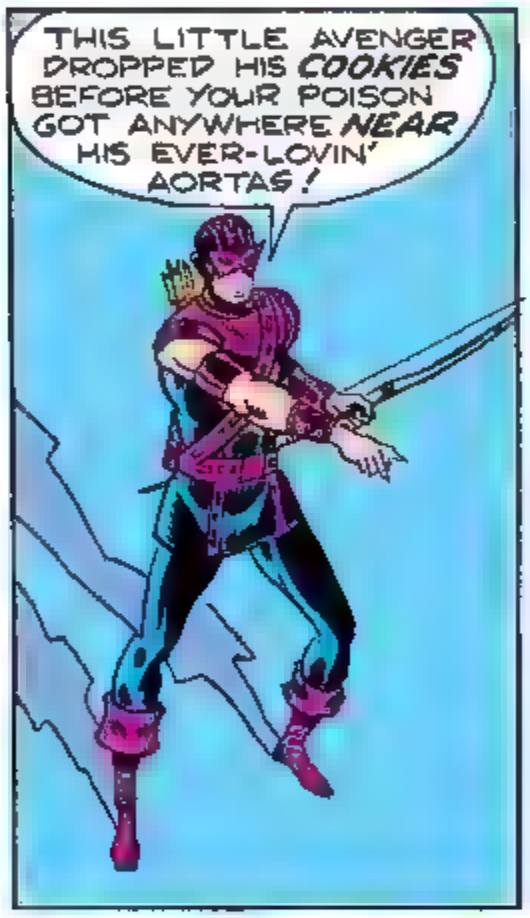

JUST AS I THOUGHT! DONALD BLAKE IS THE SURGEON OPERATING ON CAPTAIN AMERICA.
MANY HAVE SUSPECTED SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN THE DOCTOR AND THOR--
--BUT NONE BEFORE ME HAS DEDUCED THE TRUE CONNECTION. THEY ARE THE SAME MAN!

BUT THOUGH THOR BE IMMORTAL--
--DR. BLAKE CAN DIE!

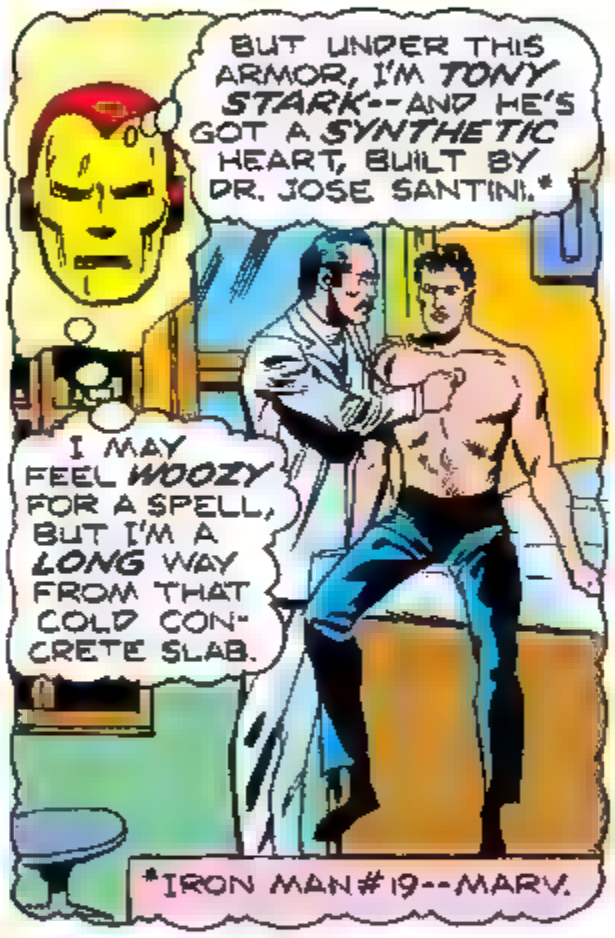

AND SINCE ONLY BLAKE HAS THE ABILITY TO SAVE CAPTAIN AMERICA, WITH ONE BULLET--
--I KILL TWO AVENGERS!
END CHAPTER TWO

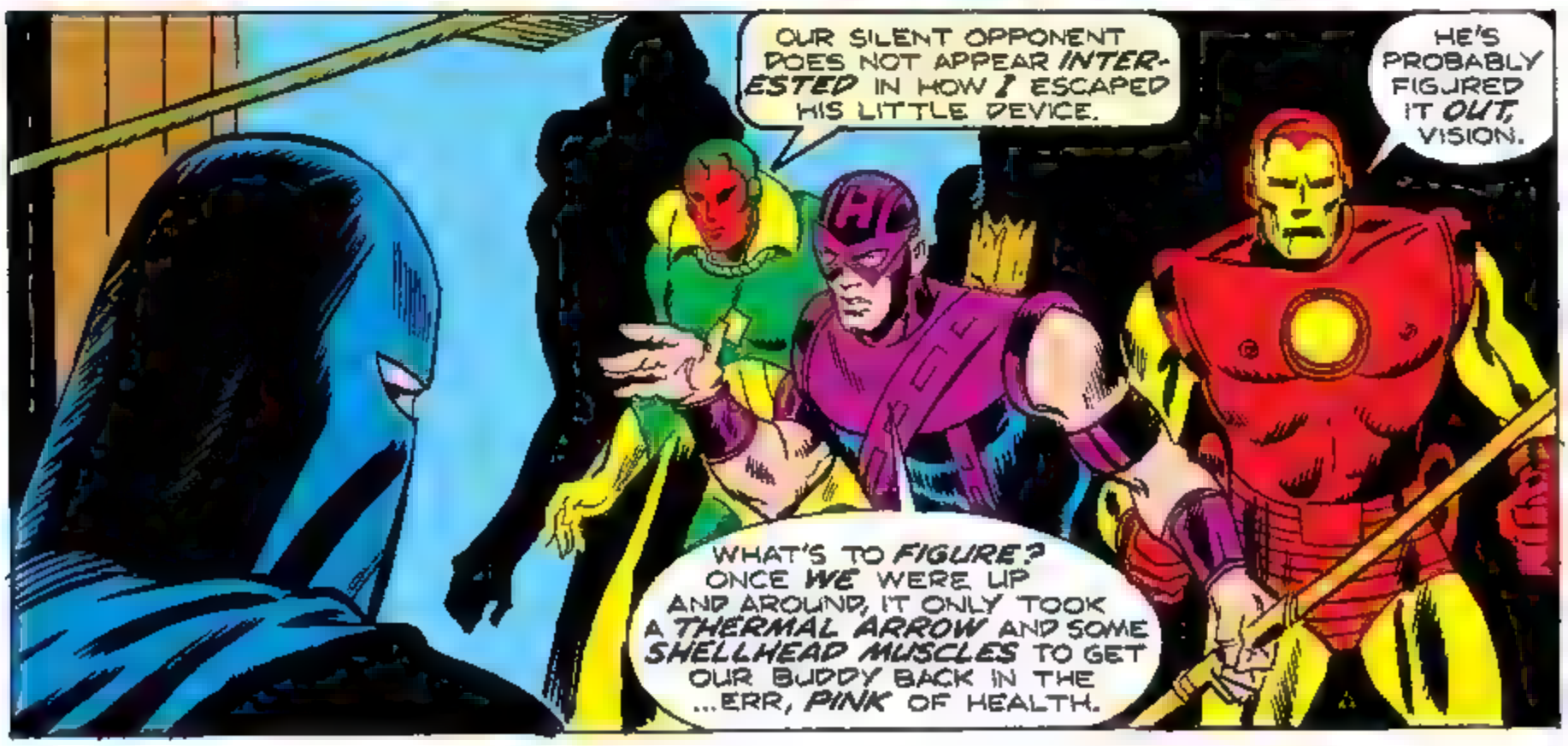
CHAPTER THREE
NOTHING OUR OWN BUT DEATH
TWANGG!
NO!
I LEFT YOU ALL FOR DEAD!
GUESS AGAIN, MASKED MARVEL!

THE POISON SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU BY NOW!
YEAH, THE VISION TOLD US HOW IT WAS SUPPOSED TO OFF SHELLHEAD AND ME WHEN IT REACHED OUR HEARTS. MIGHTA DONE JUST THAT, TOO--
--EXCEPT THAT THE STUFF REACHED THE OL' HAWK'S GLASS STOMACH FIRST!
LEMME SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU, CHUCKLES.


THIS LITTLE AVENGER DROPPED HIS COOKIES BEFORE YOUR POISON GOT ANYWHERE NEAR HIS EVER-LOVIN' AORTAS!

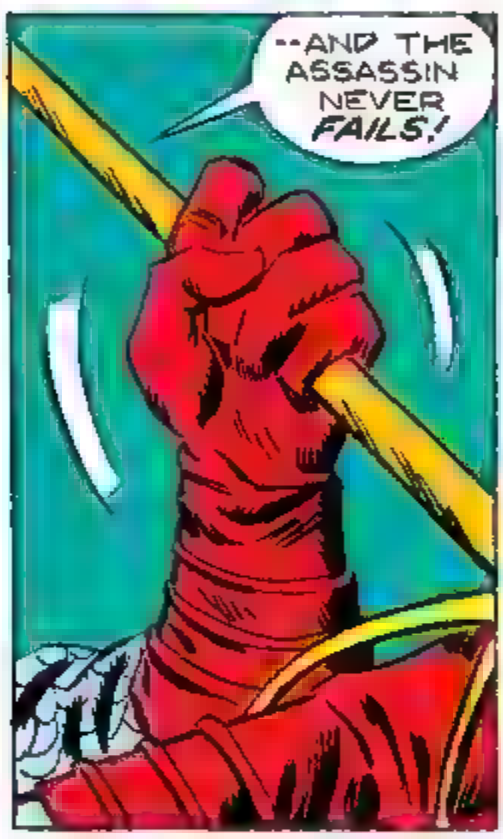
IT'S THE AVENGERS' DAY FOR LUCKY BREAKS, FELLA. MY CONSTITUTION ISN'T ANY HARDIER THAN HAWKEYE'S.
CAN'T TELL OUR FUMING FREND THE REAL REASON HIS POISON DIDN'T KILL ME. IT WAS DESIGNED TO BECOME LETHAL ON REACHING THE HUMAN HEART.


BUT UNDER THIS ARMOR, I'M TONY STARK--AND HE'S GOT A SYNTHETIC HEART, BUILT BY DR. JOSE SANTINI.*
I MAY FEEL WOOZY FOR A SPELL, BUT I'M A LONG WAY FROM THAT COLD CONCRETE SLAB.
*IRON MAN #19--MARV.


OUR SILENT OPPONENT DOES NOT APPEAR INTERESTED IN HOW I ESCAPED HIS LITTLE DEVICE.
HE'S PROBABLY FIGURED IT OUT, VISION.
WHAT'S TO FIGURE? ONCE WE WERE UP AND AROUND, IT ONLY TOOK A THERMAL ARROW AND SOME SHELLHEAD MUSCLES TO GET OUR BUDDY BACK IN THE ...ERR, PINK OF HEALTH.

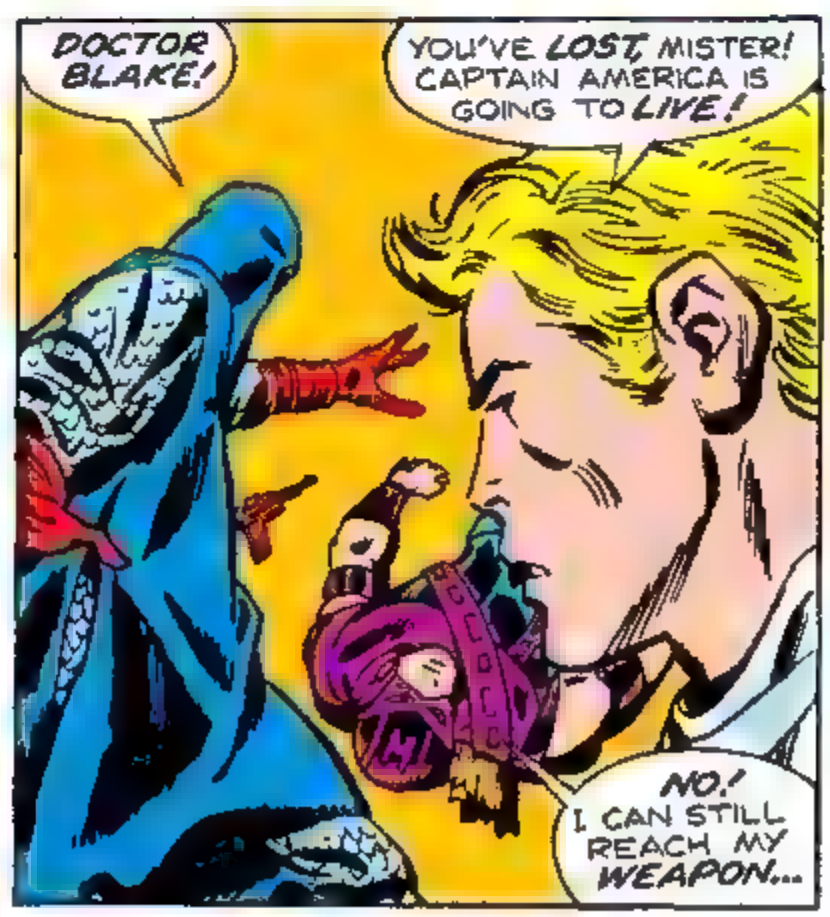
IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN COUNTING, THE SCORE IS AVENGERS 3, BAD GUYS 0.
ZERO, HAWKEYE?
WHAT ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA?
CAP! THEN YOU'RE THE CREEP THAT TRIED TO WASTE HIM!

I'LL-- WHOOF!
FOOL!
WHOMP!
I AM THE ASSASSIN--


--AND THE ASSASSIN NEVER FAILS!

FREEZE, AVENGERS! ONE WRONG MOVE--
--AND THERE WON'T BE ENOUGH OF HAWKEYE'S HEAD LEFT TO KEEP HIS NECK WARM!
HE'S GOT US, VISION!
I'M GLAD YOU APPRE...

WHACK!
ARRGH!


DOCTOR BLAKE!
YOU'VE LOST, MISTER! CAPTAIN AMERICA IS GOING TO LIVE!
NO! I CAN STILL REACH MY WEAPON...

BUT CAN YOU REACH IT BEFORE MY POWER BLAST REDUCES IT TO A USELESS HEAP OF SLAG?
SPAKK!
I THINK NOT, ASSASSIN.

NICE GOING, VISION. AND JUST TO MAKE SURE OUR PLAYMATE ISN'T HARBORING ANY MORE WEAPONS--
ZAKK!
--MY REPULSOR RAYS WILL RIP THAT BULKY COSTUME RIGHT OFF HIM!

HOLY HANNAH!
IT'S THE NURSE!

AN AVENGER REGISTERING SURPRISE THAT HIS ENEMY COULD BE A WOMAN? REALLY, HAWKEYE.
YOU'VE SEEN YOUR OWN MOONDRAGON AND THE SCARLET WITCH IN ACTION. DO YOU STILL DOUBT THAT A WOMAN COULD DESIGN AND CARRY OUT THIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST YOU?
THAT A WOMAN COULD VERY NEARLY DESTROY FIVE OF THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST HEROES?

THEN CAST ASIDE YOUR FOOLISH DOUBTS, ARCHER.
SHE'S GOT SOMETHING TAPED BEHIND HER BACK!

FOR THE CAMPAIGN IS NOT OVER YET!

THE GAS IS UNFORTUNATELY ONLY *SLIGHTLY* TOXIC. IT WILL CAUSE THEM NO MORE THAN *MILD* DISCOMFORT.

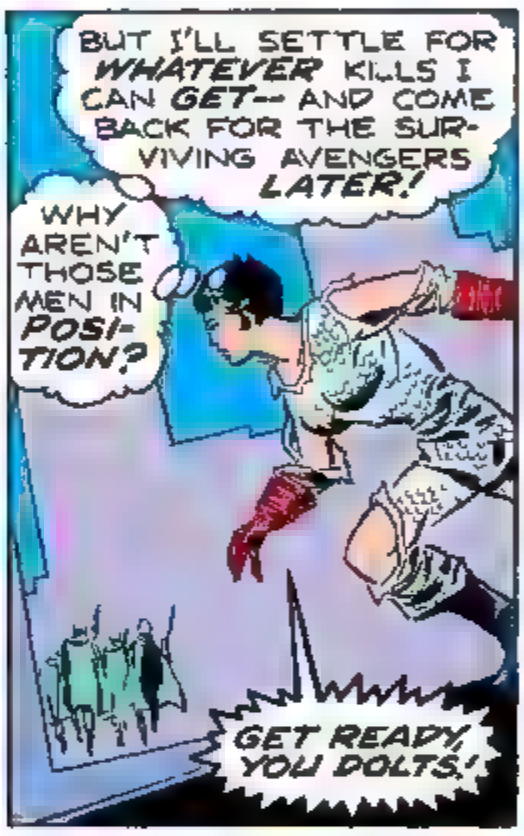
BUT IT *WILL* COVER MY ESCAPE!

SOME KIND OF GAFF-GAFF'S FAST-SPREADING *SMOKE-SCREEN!* I CAN'T EVEN *SEE* HER THROUGH IT!

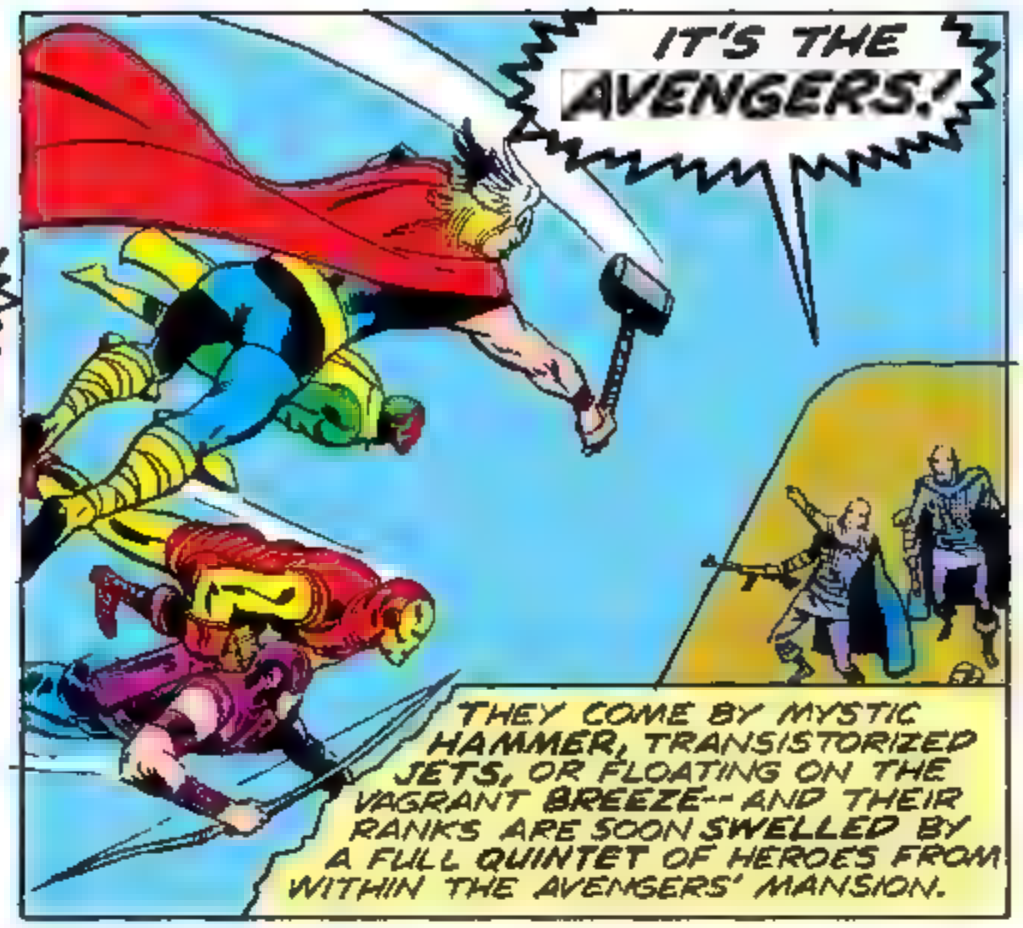
DON'T *INHALE,* CLINT! IT MAY BE *POISONOUS!*

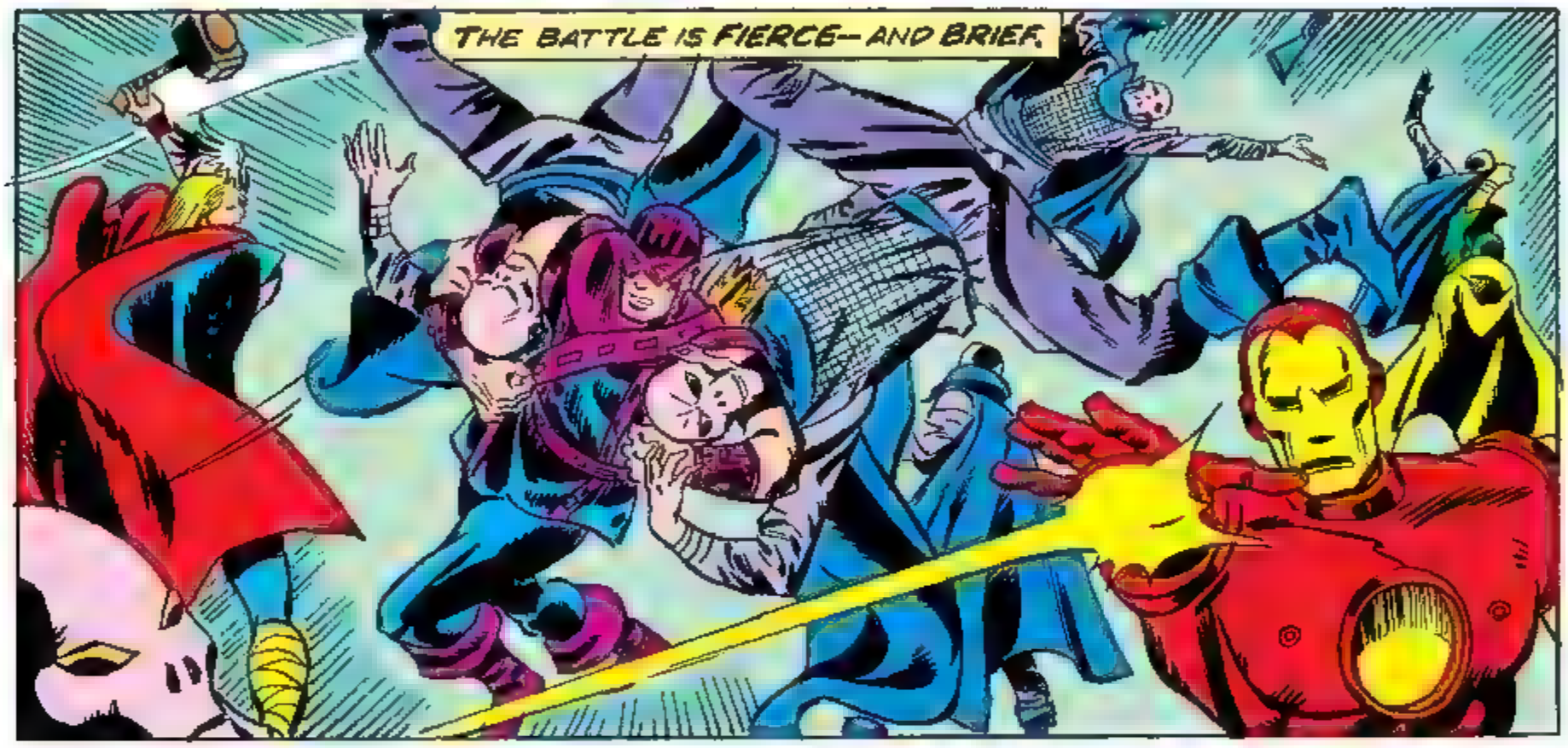
I'LL TRY TO *DISPERSE* IT WITH MY REPULSOR RAYS!

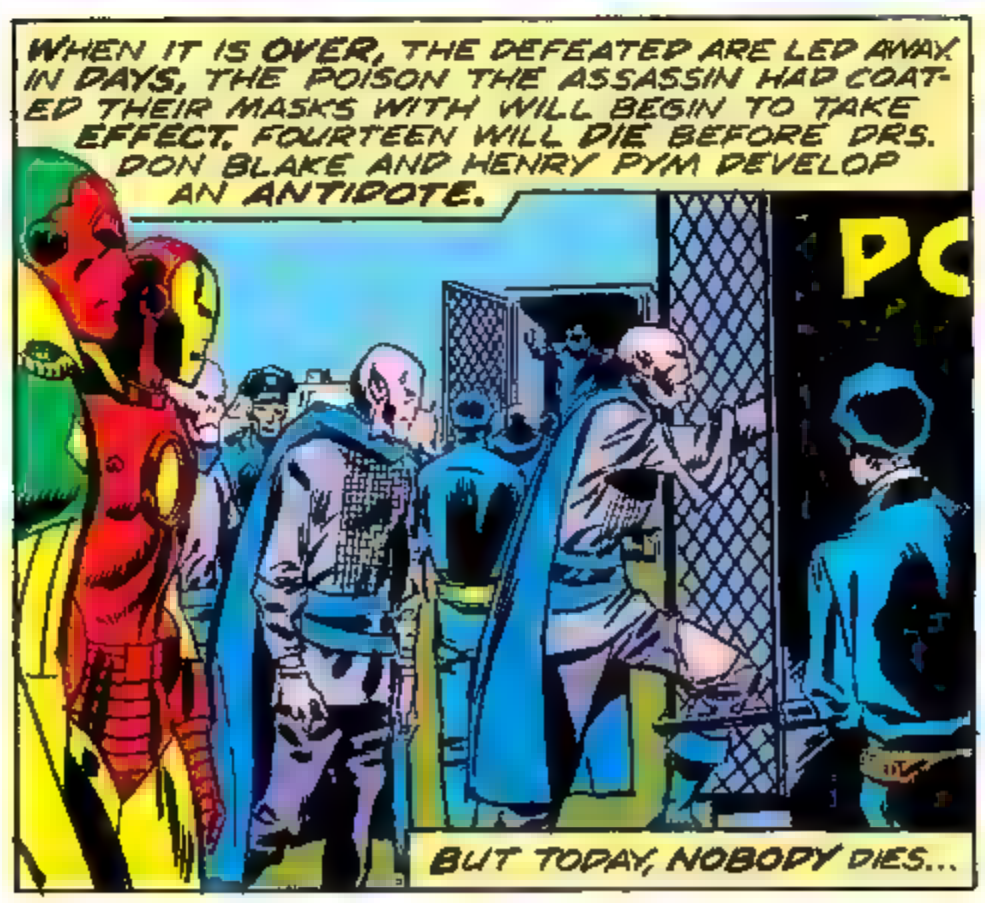
HURRY, IRON MAN. OUR FOE IS *MOVING!*



THE OPERATION HAS TO BE SCRUBBED, D-4! ORDER THE MEN TO GET...
WE'RE TOO LATE!
"D" SQUAD! BATTLE STATIONS!


IT'S THE AVENGERS!
THEY COME BY MYSTIC HAMMER, TRANSISTORIZED JETS, OR FLOATING ON THE VAGRANT BREEZE--AND THEIR RANKS ARE SOON SWELLED BY A FULL QUINTET OF HEROES FROM WITHIN THE AVENGERS' MANSION.


THE BATTLE IS FIERCE--AND BRIEF.


WHEN IT IS OVER, THE DEFEATED ARE LED AWAY. IN DAYS, THE POISON THE ASSASSIN HAD COATED THEIR MASKS WITH WILL BEGIN TO TAKE EFFECT. FOURTEEN WILL DIE BEFORE DRS. DON BLAKE AND HENRY PYM DEVELOP AN ANTIDOTE.
BUT TODAY, NOBODY DIES...

...SAVE FOR ONE...
...WHOSE FACE IS SET IN A DEATH-MASK OF ETERNAL HATE.
HATRED PERHAPS DIRECTED MORE INWARD THAN OUT.

CAPTAIN AMERICA RECOVERS; AVENGERS BATTLE ATTACKERS

Captain America has recovered from the mysterious injuries he received three nights ago, said an Avengers spokesman this morning. Despite a second attempt on the far-famed hero of World War II's life, Dr. Donald Blake, renown surgeon, was able to successfully perform the operation which saved the masked adventurer's life.

In a related assault, some two outside their Manhattan-based headquarters. The fierce, if brief, struggle resulted in one death, an unidentified young woman. She was apparently a member of the attacking force slain by a stray blast fired by one of her fellow assailants. There has been official speculation that she was, in fact, the leader of the attacking force, but this remains unconfirmed, as do reports of an underworld con-

ing from a drug raid on which he had accompanied New York City police officers. Though the nature of his injuries have yet to be made public, it is known that experts across the country were called in for consultation, including Dr. Reed Richards, leader of the Fantastic Four, and Dr. William Foster, president of a Los Angeles-based Stark Industries research company. Dr. Blake has said that Captain America

NEXT: AT LAST: THE SQUADRON SUPREME SAGA YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

CRISIS ON OTHER-EARTH!

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
25¢
147
MAY
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
THE SQUADRON SINISTER STRIKES AGAIN!
ALL-OUT ACTION IN THE MIGHTY MARVEL MANNER!
FLEE, MY LOVE-- QUICKLY! UNLESS YOU ESCAPE WITH THAT SERPENT CROWN, ALL OF US ARE DOOMED!
WAR AGAINST THE WORLD!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!**®

WE RETURN YOU NOW TO YOUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED SQUADRON SUPREME SAGA!

CRISIS ON OTHER-EARTH

STEVE ENGLEHART & GEORGE PÉREZ AUTHOR/ARTIST	VINNIE COLLETTA INKER	DENISE WOHL, LETTERER PETRA G., COLORIST	MARV WOLFMAN EDITOR

CAP! THIS LOOKS LIKE OUR WORLD, BUT FROM THE SQUADRON'S SNEERS, I KNOW IT'S NOT!

I'M WITH YOU, BEAST! HUGH JONES* MUST HAVE WANTED US OUT OF HIS HAIR!

*PRESIDENT OF ROXXON OIL. --MARV.

WE BEAT YOU ON YOUR WORLD ALREADY, AVENGERS--

--NOW DR. SPECTRUM'S POWER PRISM WILL DO THE SAME THING ON OURS!

NO, SPECTRUM! I'LL TAKE YOUR BLAST!

THE REST OF YOU -- TAKE THEM!

OKAY, IRON MAN! I WANTED THIS COSTUME--

-- AND THE HELLCAT WON'T CHICKEN OUT IN THE CLUTCH!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THIS SUIT SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT TO DO ALL BY ITSELF!

IT MAKES THINGS SO EASY FOR ME

WHAT A LAUGH! SHE PICKED HYPERION!

HE'LL TEAR HER APART, WHILE I-- UNNGH!

--WHILE YOU GET PAID FOR THUMPING ME BEFORE, WHIZZER--*

--WITH INTEREST!

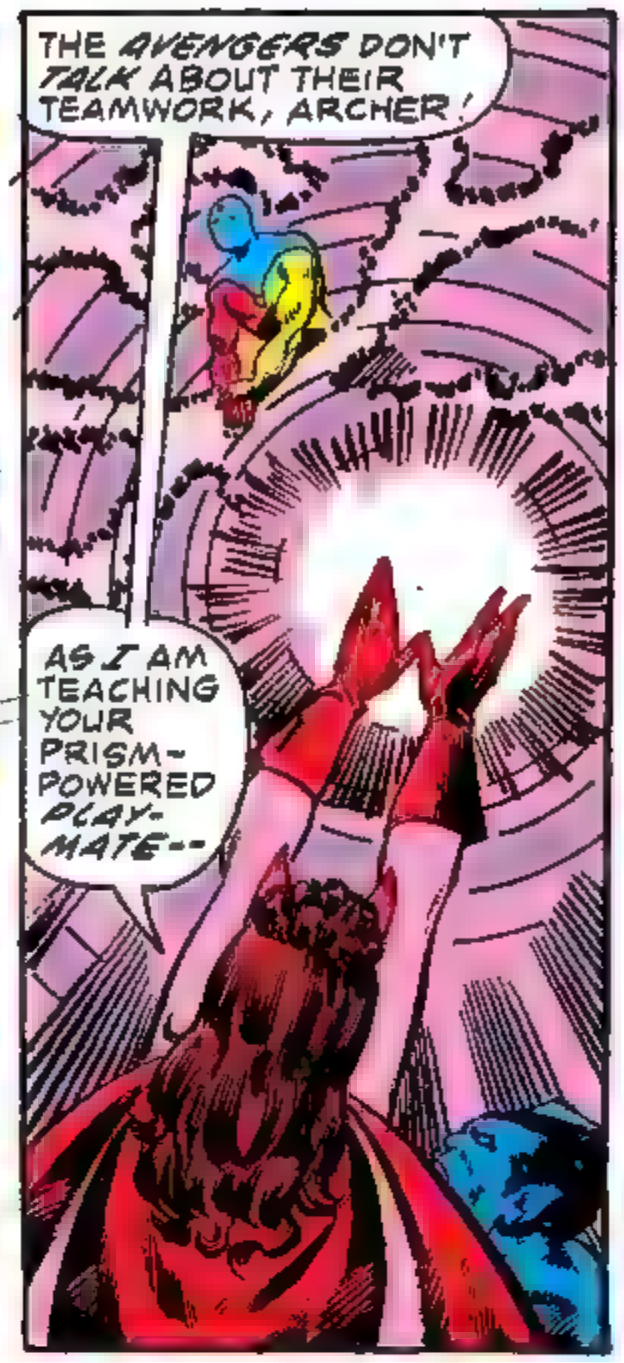
*AVENGERS #141--M.

HE CAN'T HIT ME! I ALWAYS WAS PRETTY COORDINATED, WITH MY SURFING AND SKIING--

--BUT NOW I'M OLYMPIC MATERIAL!

PLEASE, LADY LARK-- NO SINGING!

YOUR MIND-NUMBING SONG--



--THE AVENGERS PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH!

EVEN AN ALIEN GEM FALLS PREY TO YOUR WITCHCRAFT, MY DARLING! WE--

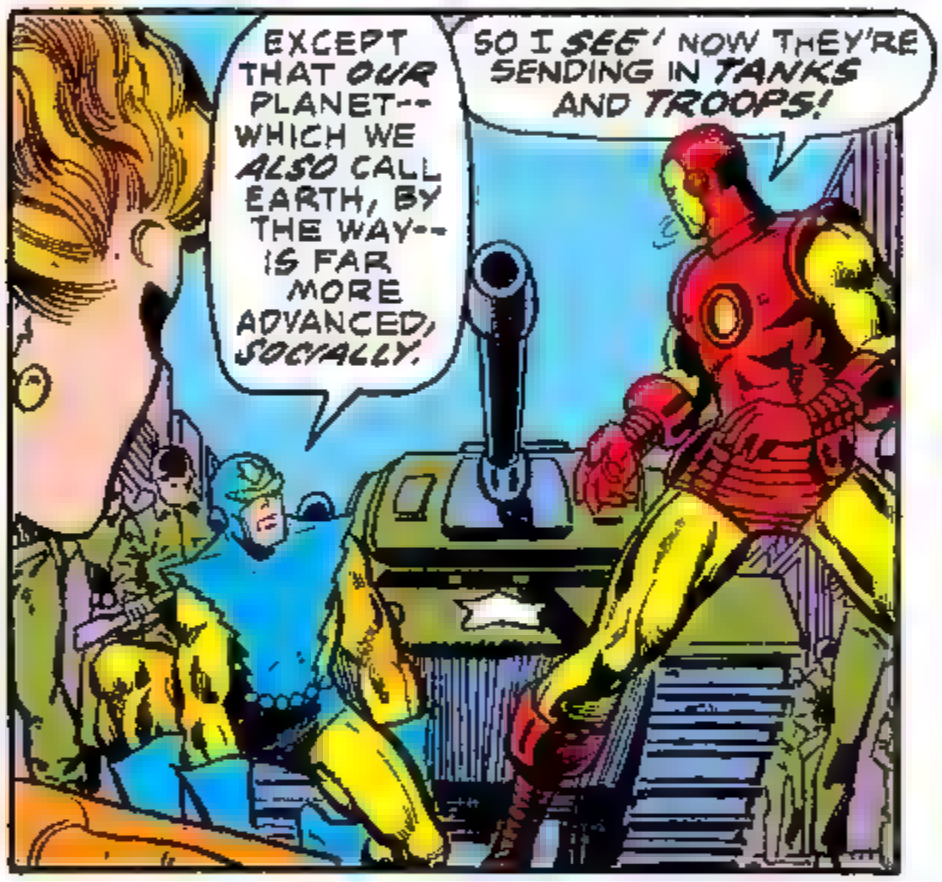
WAIT! WHAT'S THIS --IN THE SKY!!

THE VISION'S SUNKEN VISUAL SENSORS FLASH SUDDENLY, DEEP WITHIN! HE KNOWS WHAT HIS TEAM-MATES CAN'T YET MAKE OUT--!

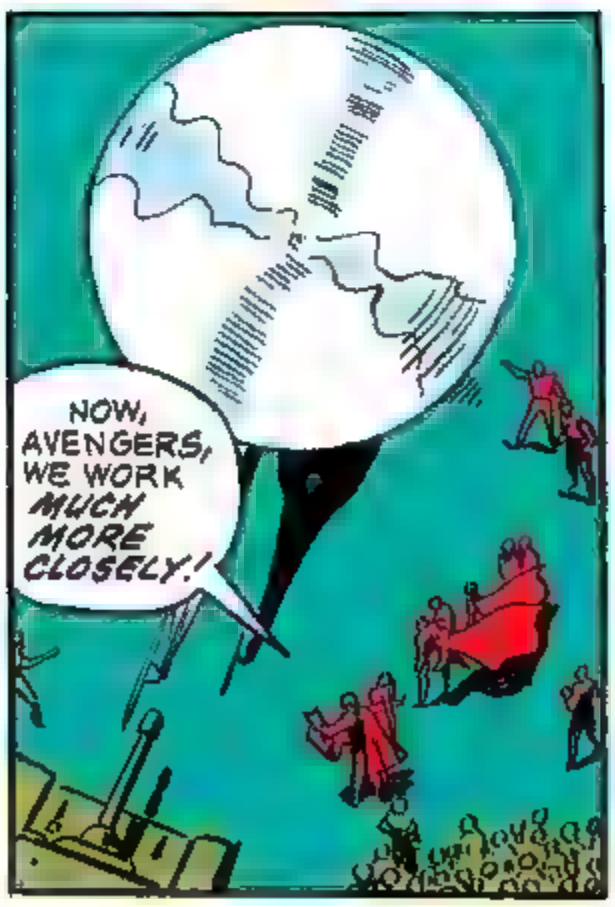
AVENGERS!
ARMY HELICOPTERS!

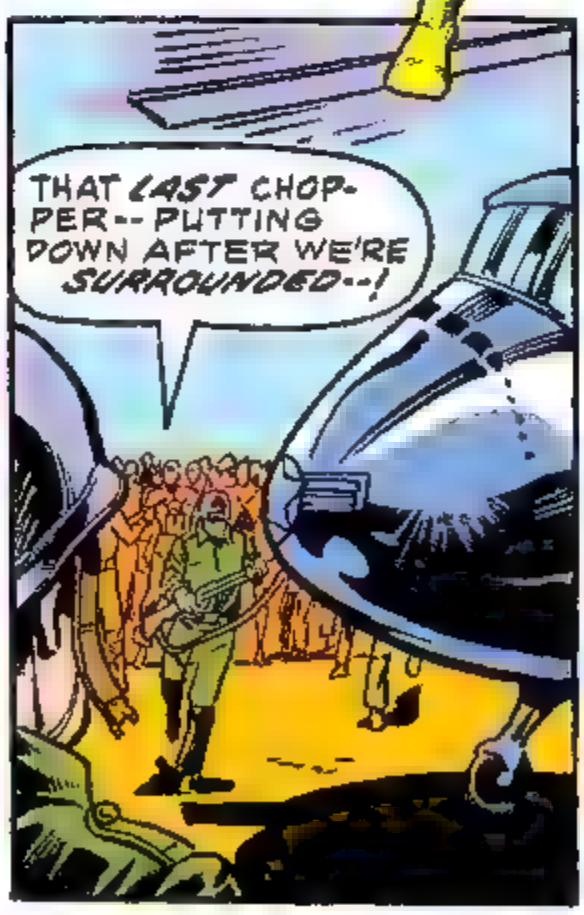
YES! I SEE THE MARKINGS NOW!
THEY'RE ALMOST LIKE OUR ARMY'S!
THIS WHOLE WORLD IS A NEAR-REPLICA OF EARTH.

OR YOUR WORLD IS A COPY OF OURS, EH, YANK?

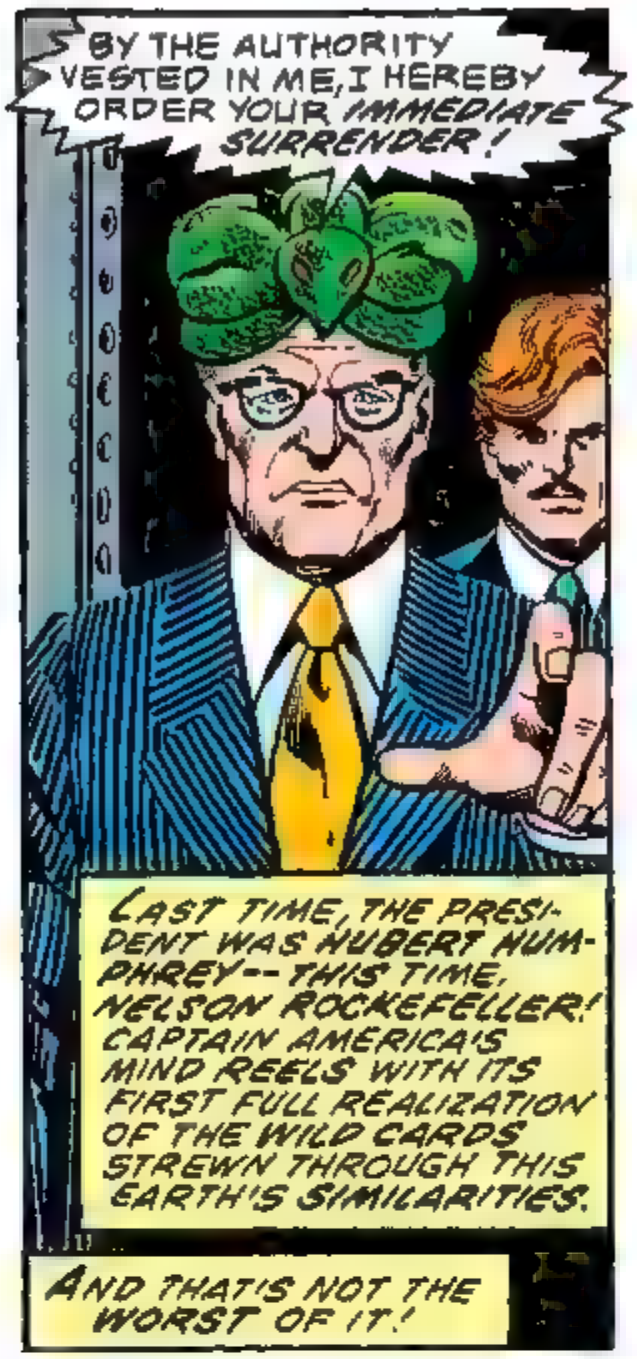

EXCEPT THAT OUR PLANET-- WHICH WE ALSO CALL EARTH, BY THE WAY-- IS FAR MORE ADVANCED, SOCIALLY.
SO I SEE! NOW THEY'RE SENDING IN TANKS AND TROOPS!

LIFE HERE HAS CHANGED SINCE YOUR MEMBERS LAST VISITED US, AVENGERS!* THEN THE SQUADRON SUPREME MERELY AIDED THE BOYS IN CAPITOL CITY!
OKAY, HYPE, THAT'S =GACK= ENOUGH!
YOU =YAK= CAN LET GO NOW!
HYPE?
*IN AVENGERS #85-86 -- M.

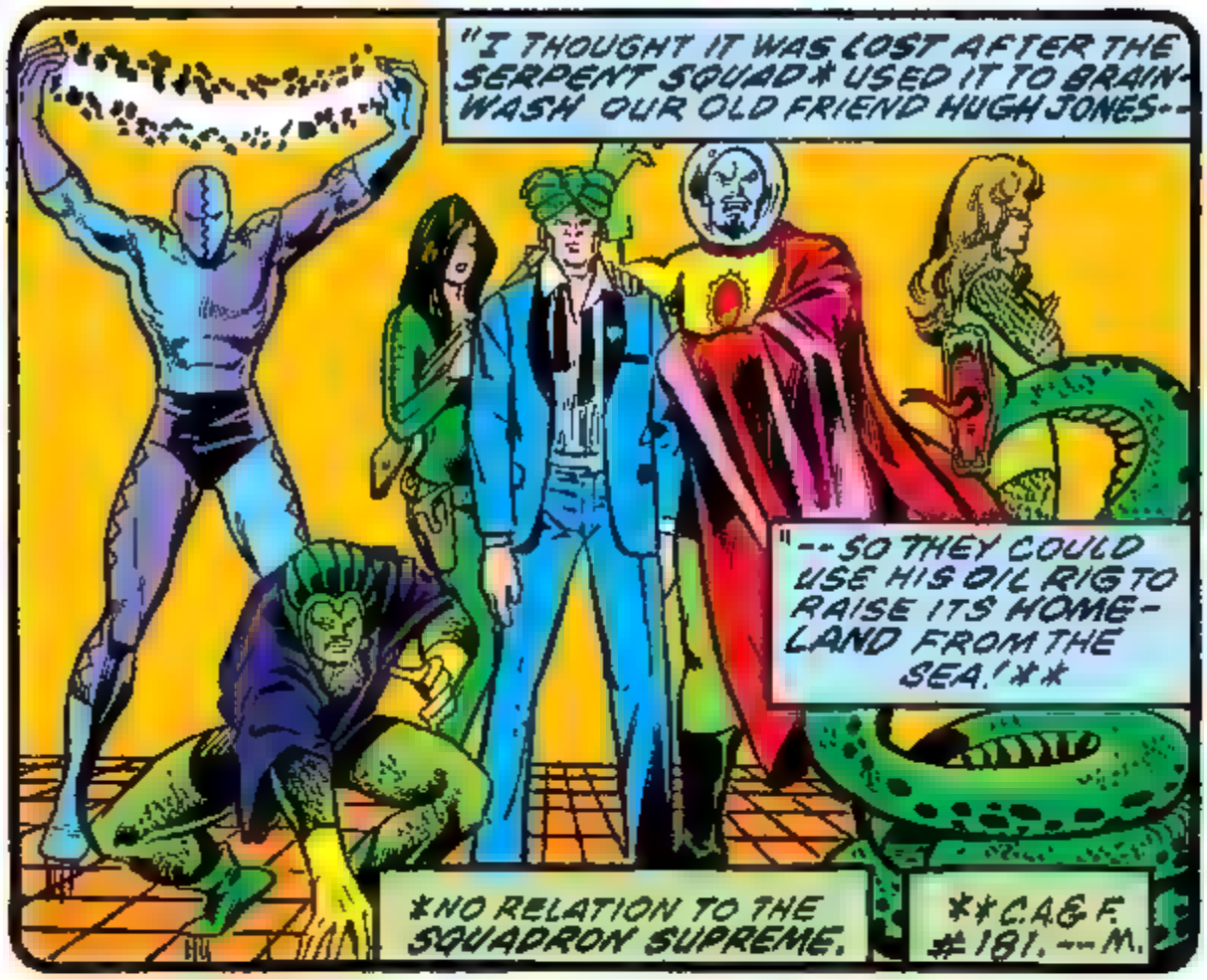

NOW, AVENGERS, WE WORK MUCH MORE CLOSELY!

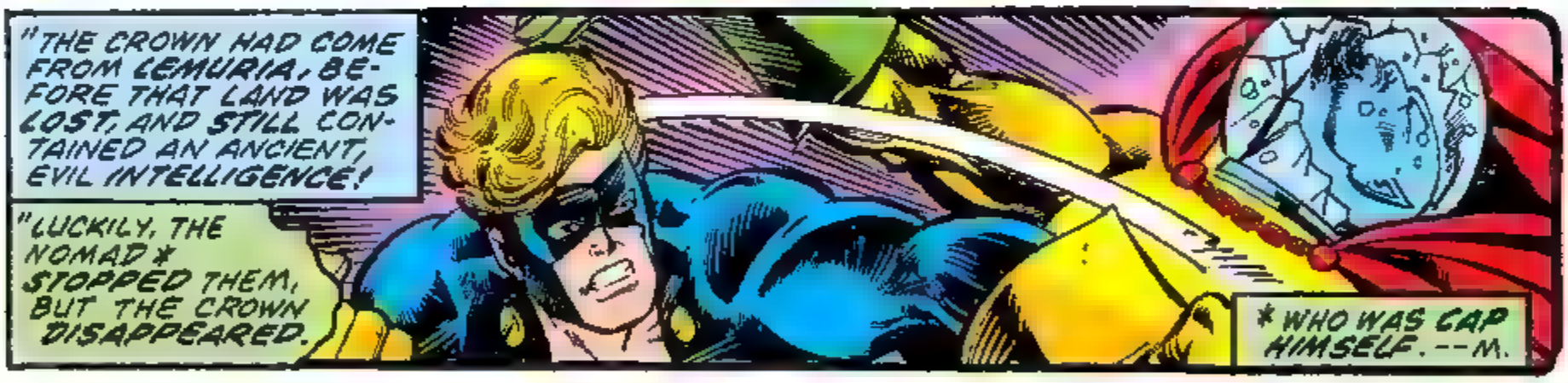

THAT LAST CHOPPER-- PUTTING DOWN AFTER WE'RE SURROUNDED--!

GOOD LORD! THERE'S NO MISTAKING IT--!
THAT'S THE PRESIDENTIAL BIRD!


BY THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME, I HEREBY ORDER YOUR IMMEDIATE SURRENDER!
LAST TIME, THE PRESIDENT WAS HUBERT HUMPHREY -- THIS TIME, NELSON ROCKEFELLER! CAPTAIN AMERICA'S MIND REELS WITH ITS FIRST FULL REALIZATION OF THE WILD CARDS STREWN THROUGH THIS EARTH'S SIMILARITIES.
AND THAT'S NOT THE WORST OF IT!

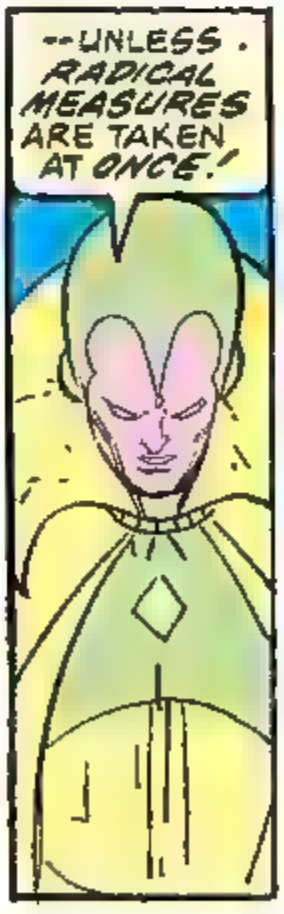
ON HIS HEAD--
--THE SERPENT CROWN!


"I THOUGHT IT WAS LOST AFTER THE SERPENT SQUAD* USED IT TO BRAINWASH OUR OLD FRIEND HUGH JONES--
"--SO THEY COULD USE HIS OIL RIG TO RAISE ITS HOMELAND FROM THE SEA.'**
*NO RELATION TO THE SQUADRON SUPREME.
**C.A.& F. #181. --M.


"THE CROWN HAD COME FROM LEMURIA, BEFORE THAT LAND WAS LOST, AND STILL CONTAINED AN ANCIENT, EVIL INTELLIGENCE!
"LUCKILY, THE NOMAD* STOPPED THEM, BUT THE CROWN DISAPPEARED.
* WHO WAS CAP HIMSELF. --M.

PERHAPS IT'S THIS WORLD'S CROWN, CAP.
DEFINITELY!
AND EVEN MORE DEFINITE--

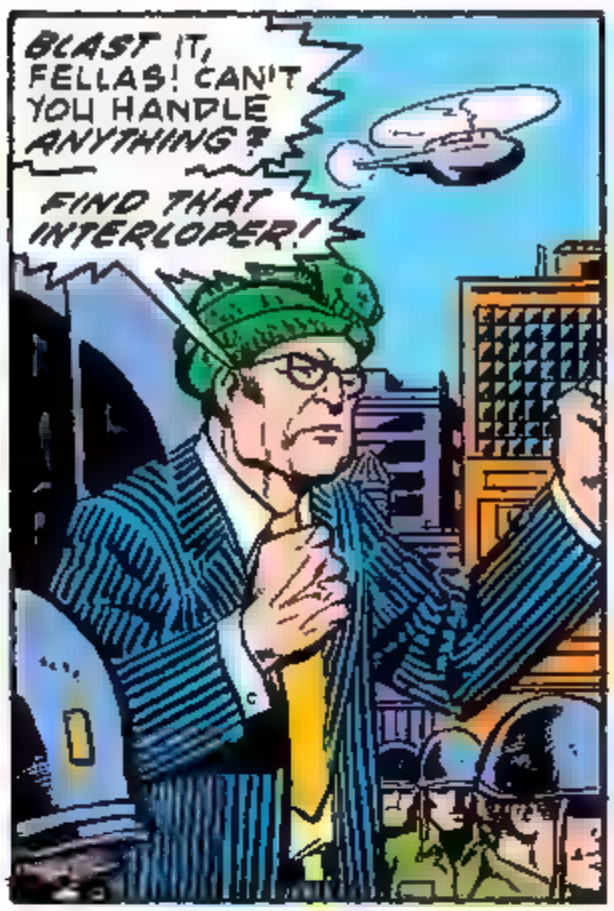
--IS THE DANGER OF OUR PRESENT POSITION--


--UNLESS RADICAL MEASURES ARE TAKEN AT ONCE!

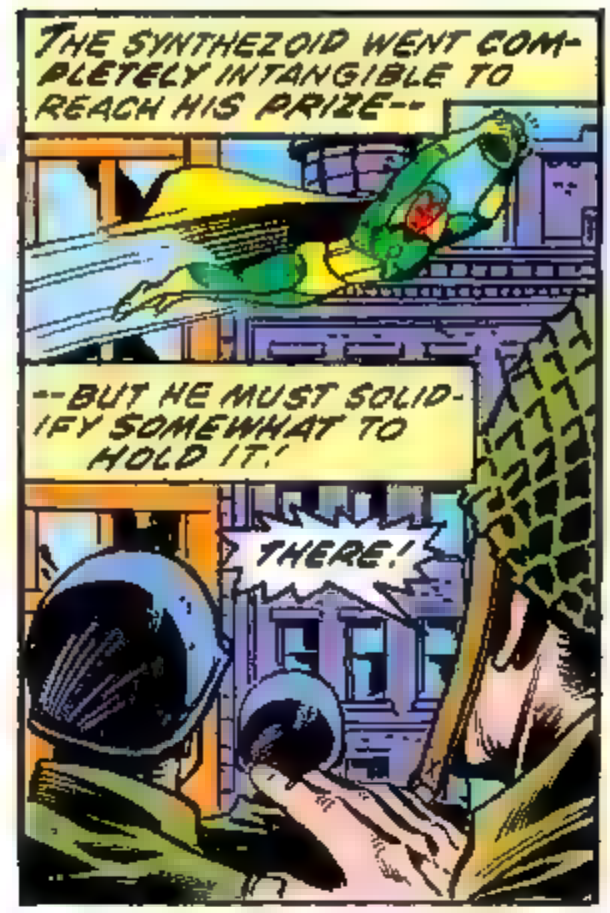
WHAT THE--?

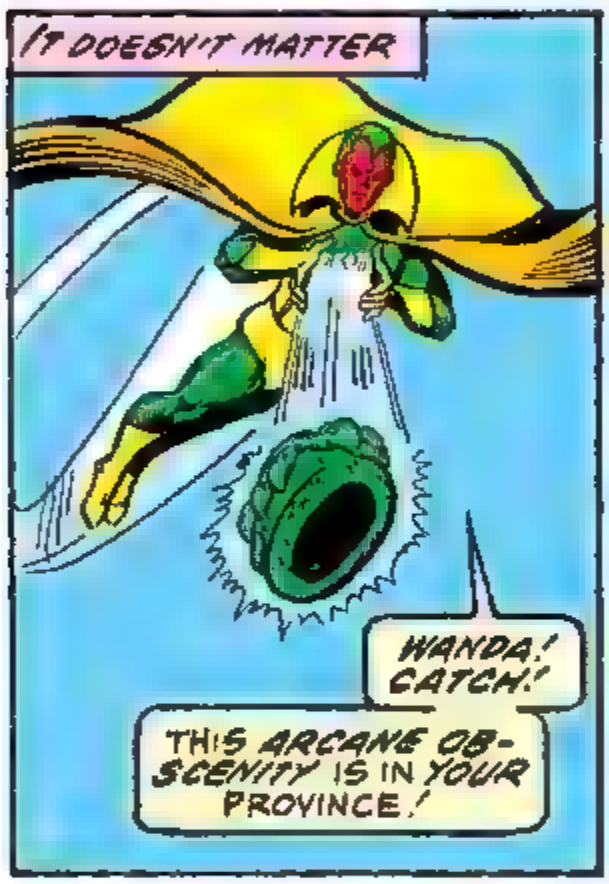
WHERE'D HE GO?
HE'S GONE!

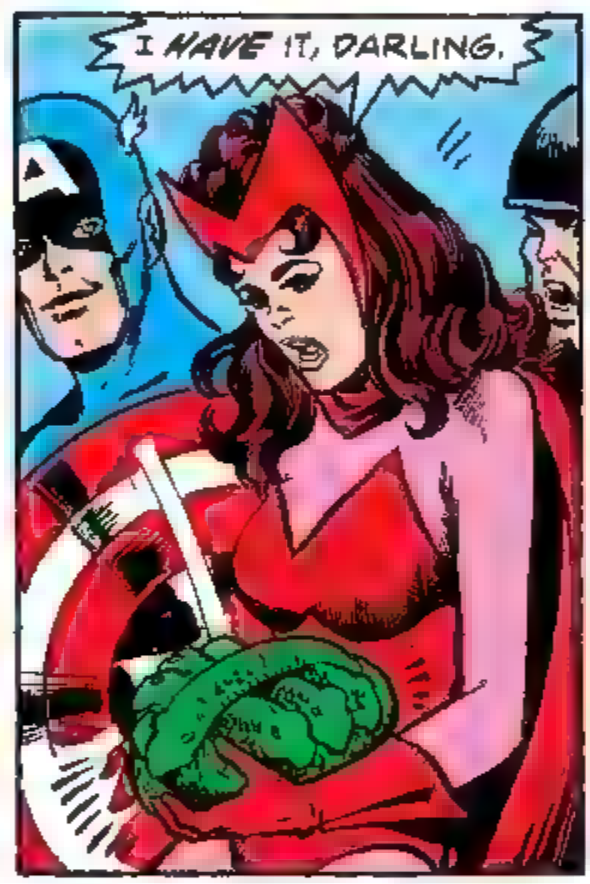
NOT IF ONE HAS EYES TO SEE...
...A PALE GREEN BREEZE.


BLAST IT, FELLAS! CAN'T YOU HANDLE ANYTHING?
FIND THAT INTERLOPER!

FIND HIM!

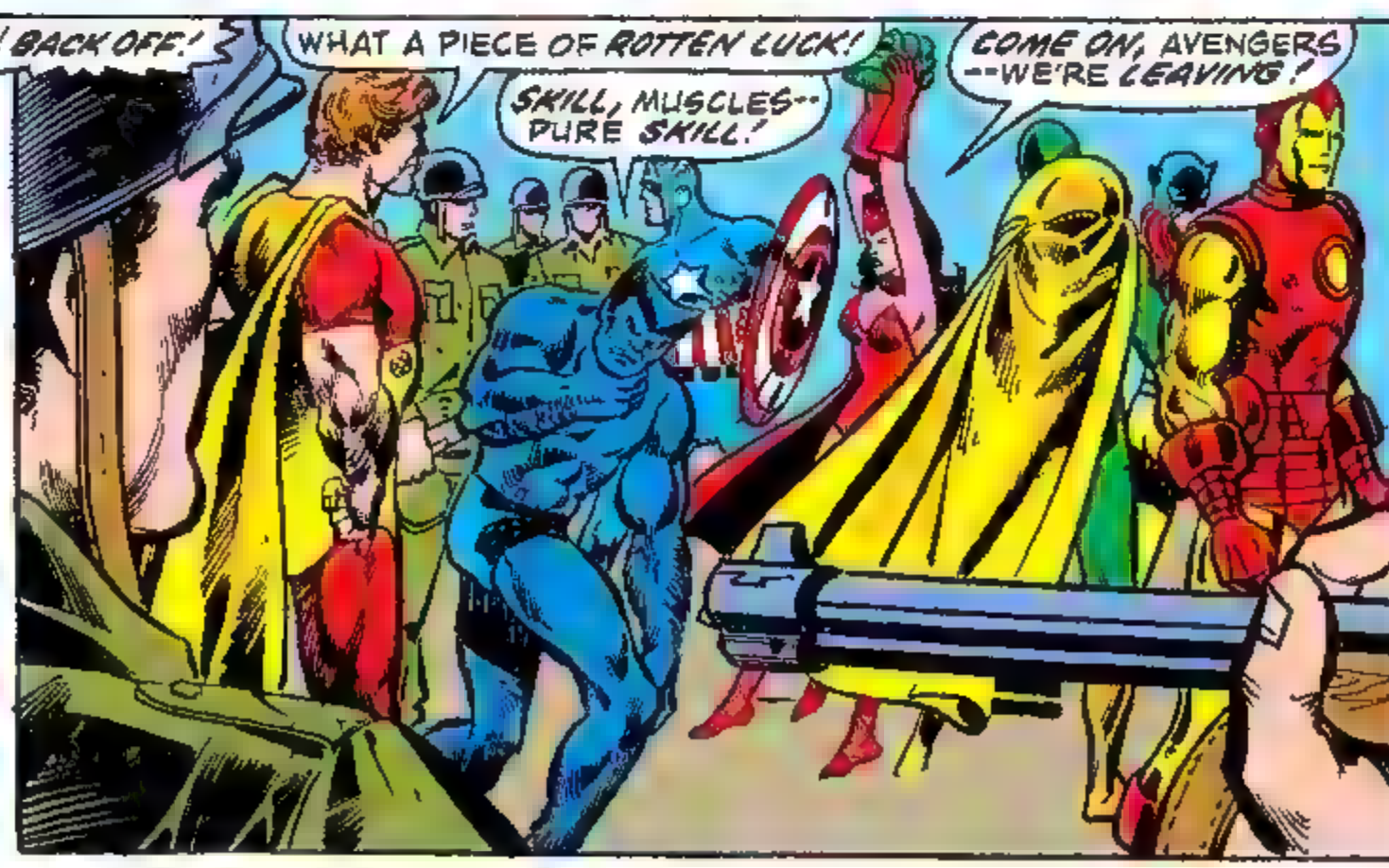

THE SYNTHEZOID WENT COMPLETELY INTANGIBLE TO REACH HIS PRIZE--
--BUT HE MUST SOLIDIFY SOMEWHAT TO HOLD IT!
THERE!

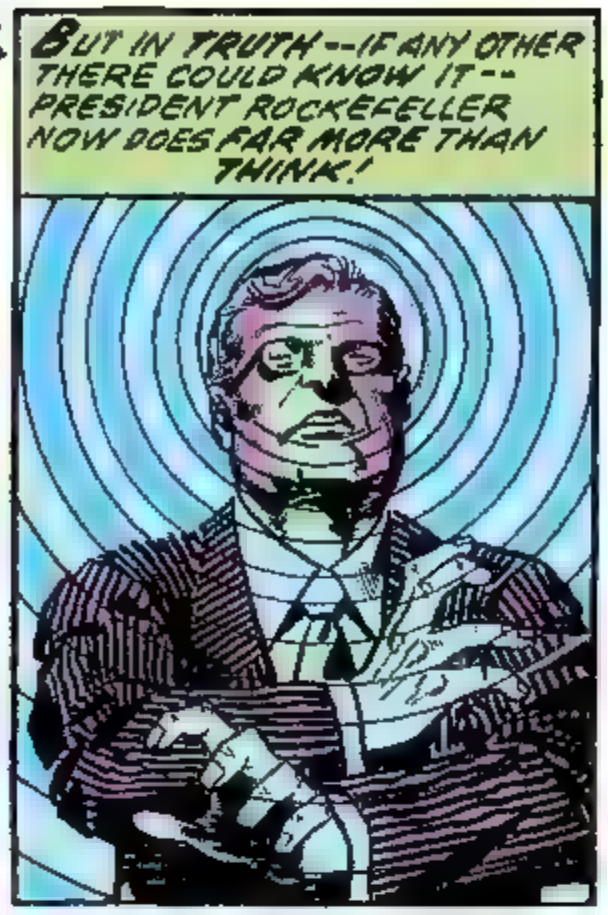

IT DOESN'T MATTER
WANDA! CATCH!
THIS ARCANE OBSCENITY IS IN YOUR PROVINCE!


I HAVE IT, DARLING.

NOW, MR. PRESIDENT, CALL OFF YOUR MEN--
--OR BEHOLD THE POWER OF THE SCARLET WITCH!

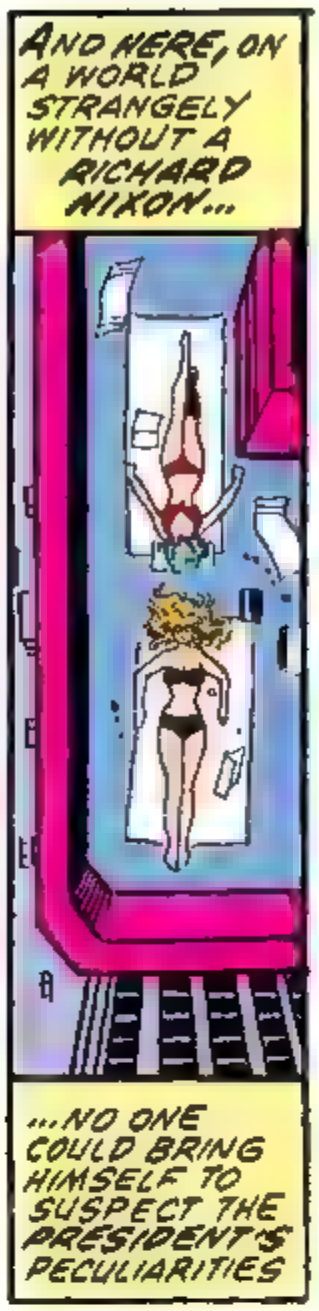
BACK OFF, BOYS! BACK OFF!
THE CROWN MUST REMAIN INTACT!

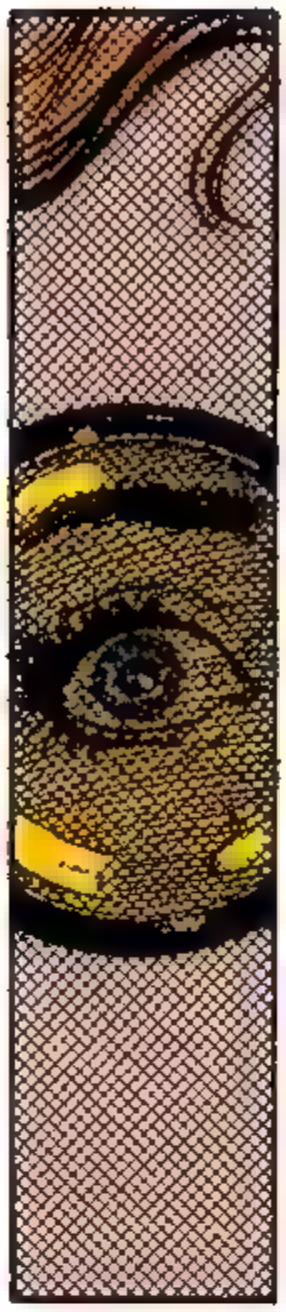

WHAT A PIECE OF ROTTEN LUCK!
SKILL, MUSCLES-- PURE SKILL!
COME ON, AVENGERS --WE'RE LEAVING!



THIS, THEN, IS THE SECRET OF THE SERPENT CROWN: IT, AND ITS TWIN ON OUR EARTH, AND ALL THE OTHERS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE MYRIAD REALMS OF REALITY--ARE ALL MERE MANIFESTATIONS OF A SINGLE SERPENTINE NETHER-MIND, OLDER THAN ANTIQUITY! THEY ARE NUMBERLESS, AND THEY ARE ONE--

--AND EACH AND EVERY HUMAN BEING WHO EVER PLACES ONE ON HIS HEAD BECOMES THAT SERPENT'S SLAVE FOREVER, IN CONTACT WITH ALL THE OTHERS! HUGH JONES SUFFERED A SIDE-EFFECT TO HIS KIDNAPPING, SOMETHING THE NOMAD COULD NOT HAVE SUSPECTED.


AND HERE, ON A WORLD STRANGELY WITHOUT A RICHARD NIXON...
...NO ONE COULD BRING HIMSELF TO SUSPECT THE PRESIDENT'S PECULIARITIES



EEAAAHH!

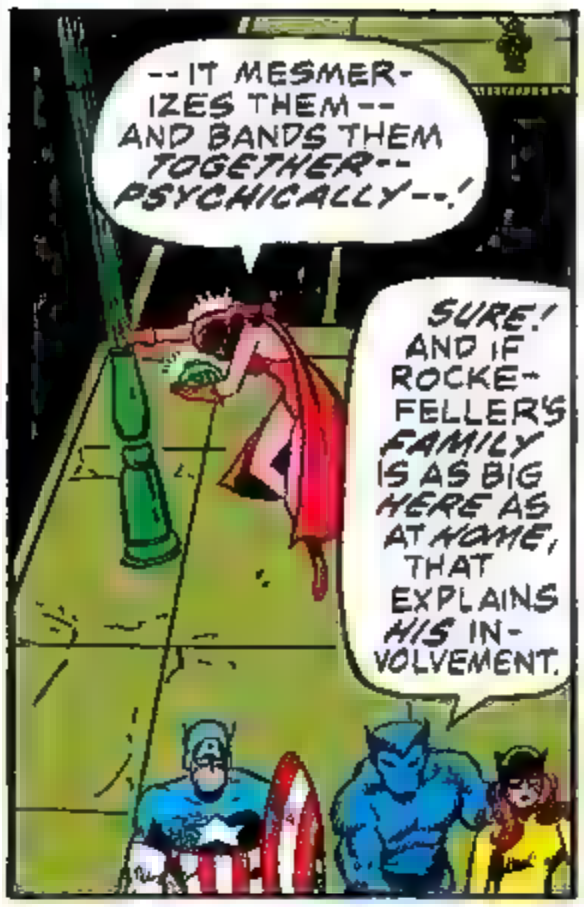
DID YOU SEE THAT, LOIS? IT WAS THOSE ALIENS WHO RIOTED DOWNTOWN!
C'MON, LONNI, WE'VE GOTTA REPORT THIS!

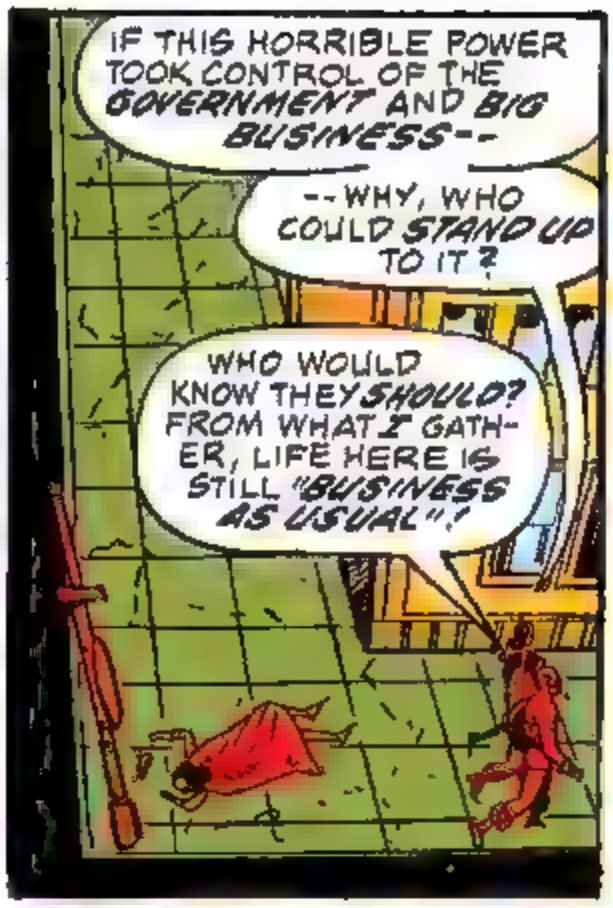
MEANWHILE, IN THE DARK AND CLUTTERED CREVICES OF THE CONCRETE CANYONS BELOW...
VISION AND IRON MAN CAN BE EASILY SPOTTED UP THERE, CAP
I KNOW, WANDA, BUT WE CAN'T HOPE TO ELUDE AN ENTIRE CITY FOR LONG, ANYWAY.
IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO BE SURE WE'RE NOT BEING FOLLOWED, RIGHT?
RIGHT, PAT
THAT'S NELLCAT TO YOU, HAIRY!

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I'VE LEARNED, PLEASE! THOUGH I'VE KNOWN INSTINCTIVELY NOT TO DON THE CROWN--

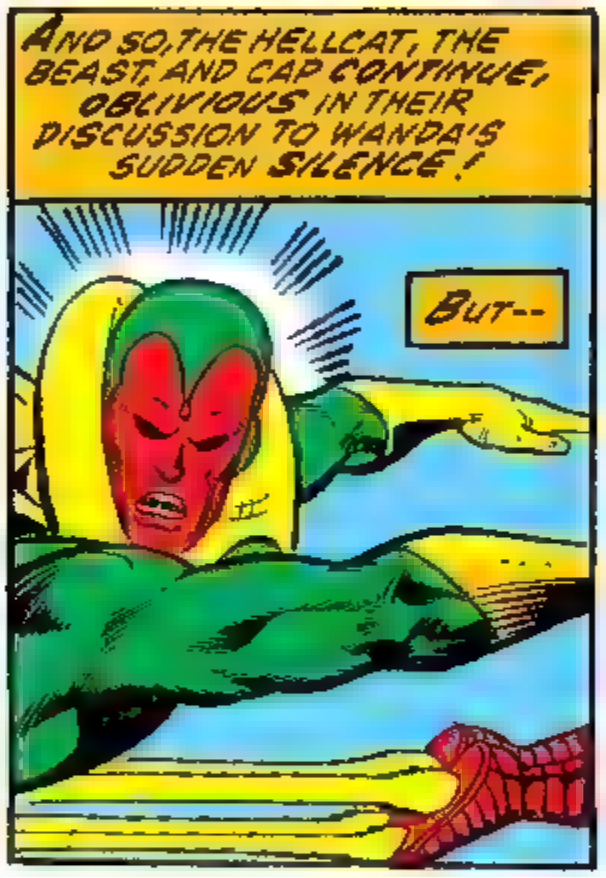
--ITS EVIL POWER IS STILL ALL TOO WEARING TO MY MUTANT MIND! SENSING EVEN A FEW OF ITS SECRETS WITHOUT SURRENDERING MYSELF HAS BEEN MORE THAN I'D EXPECTED!

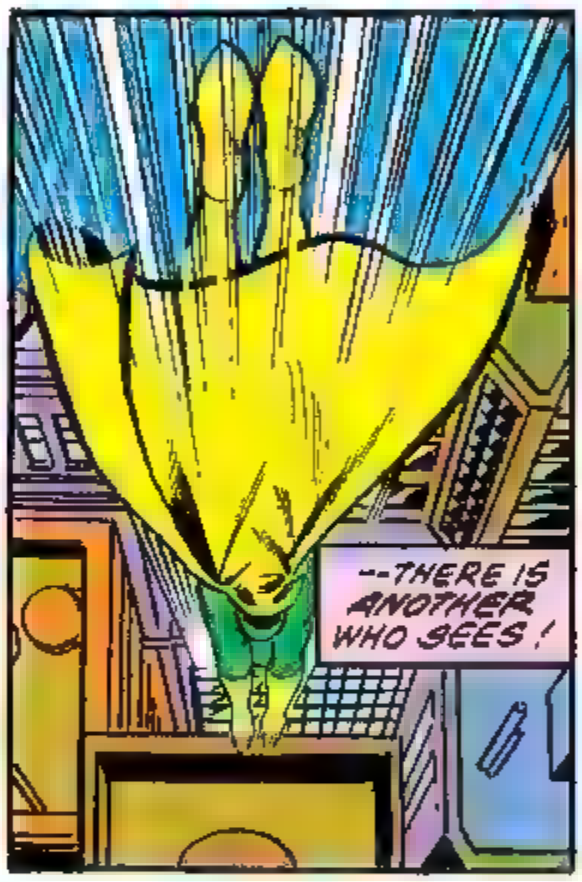
THIS STONE HAS CROWNED THE HEADS OF ALL THIS WORLD'S MAJOR CONGLOMERATES, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER! IT--IT--


--IT MESMERIZES THEM-- AND BANDS THEM TOGETHER-- PSYCHICALLY--!
SURE! AND IF ROCKEFELLER'S FAMILY IS AS BIG HERE AS AT HOME, THAT EXPLAINS HIS INVOLVEMENT.

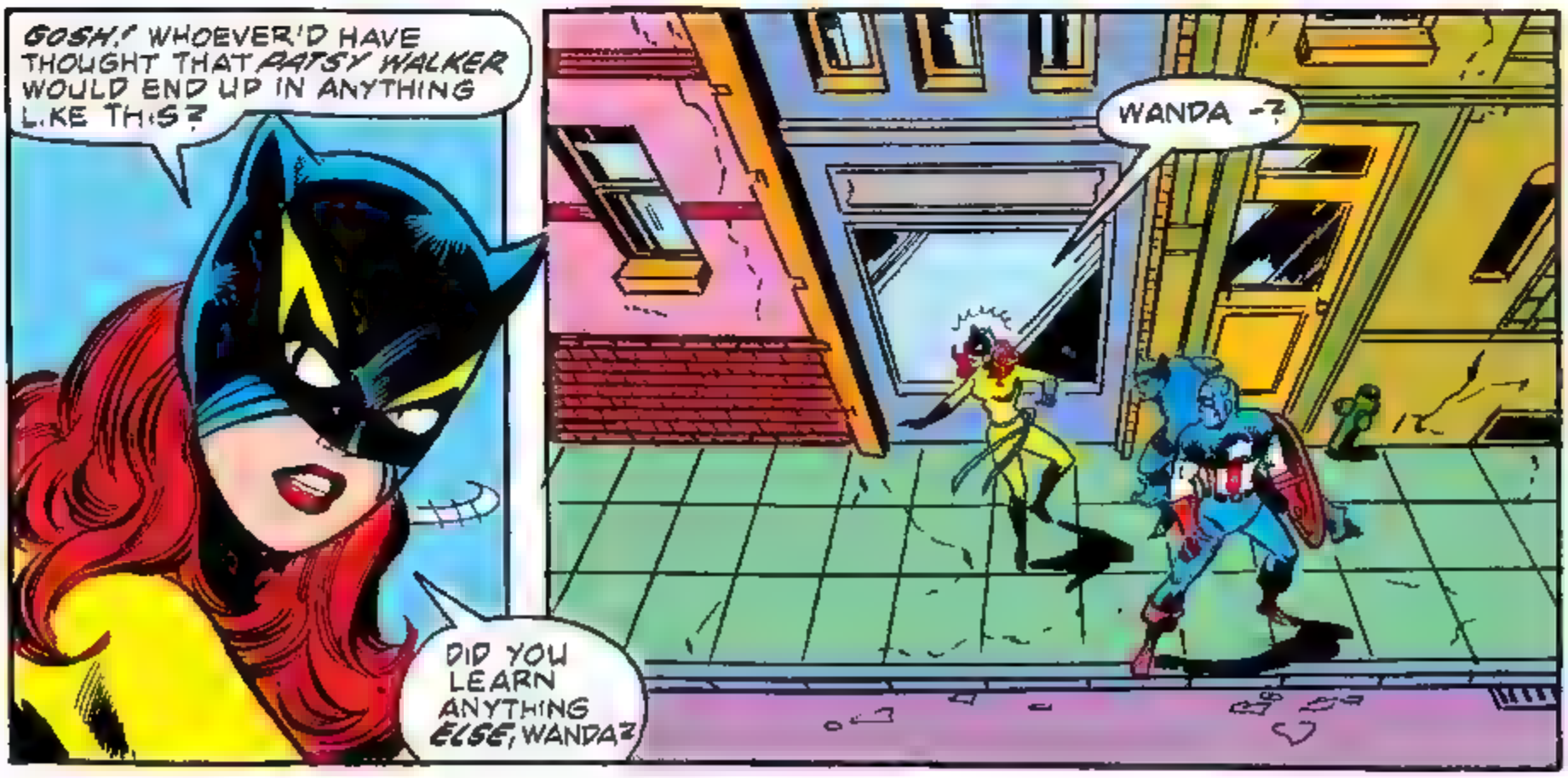

IF THIS HORRIBLE POWER TOOK CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND BIG BUSINESS--
--WHY, WHO COULD STAND UP TO IT?
WHO WOULD KNOW THEY SHOULD? FROM WHAT I GATHER, LIFE HERE IS STILL "BUSINESS AS USUAL"!

NOW THAT'S SCARY! YOU MEAN THERE MAY HAVE BEEN NOTHING TO ALERT THE PEOPLE-- JUST A GRADUAL CHANGE-OVER?
CAN THAT BE WHAT THE WHIZZER CALLED THEIR "SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT"?


AND SO, THE HELLCAT, THE BEAST, AND CAP CONTINUE, OBLIVIOUS IN THEIR DISCUSSION TO WANDA'S SUDDEN SILENCE!
BUT--


--THERE IS ANOTHER WHO SEES!

MY GOD, PEOPLE! THIS, THEN, IS WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO US--
--IF I HADN'T BROKEN UP OUR OWN WHITE HOUSE SCANDAL.*
*CAP #175-- AND ALL THE PAPERS!--M.

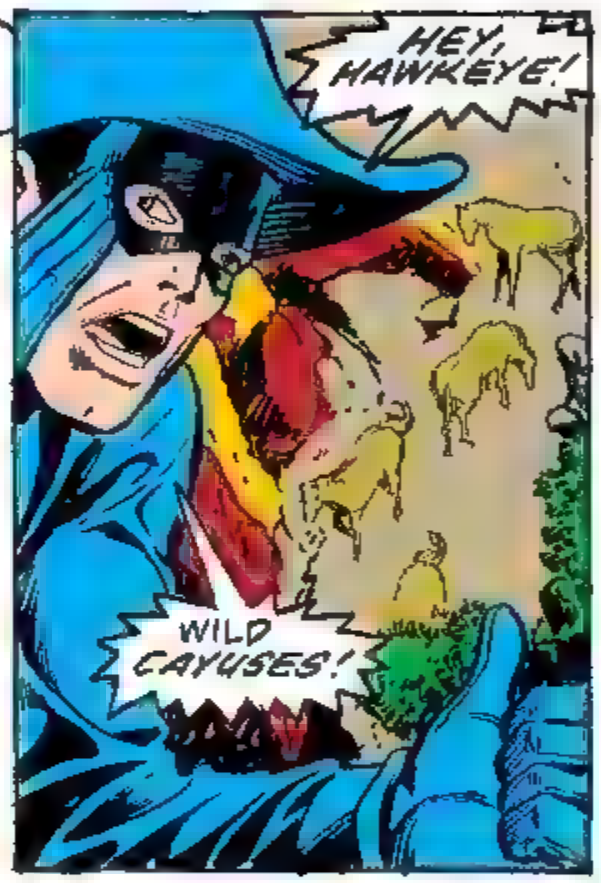

GOSH! WHOEVER'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT PATSY WALKER WOULD END UP IN ANYTHING LIKE THIS?
DID YOU LEARN ANYTHING ELSE, WANDA?
WANDA --?

TRANSITION: OUR OWN EARTH...
...NOW!

THAT--WAS TIME-TRAVEL? I FELT NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY!
EVEN SO, TWO-GUN, THIS IS THE SAME ARIZONA WE JUST LEFT--A HUNDRED-ODD YEARS LATER!
IT APPEARS PRECISELY THE SAME!
SPEAK NOT HARSHLY THEREOF, MOONDRAGON. 'TIS A BLESSING!

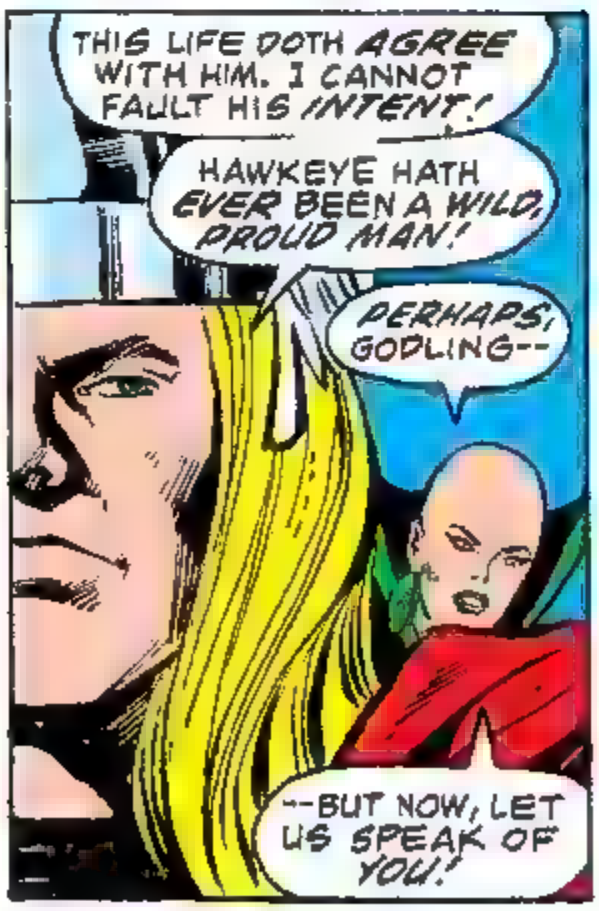
"I DO NOT SPEAK HARSHLY, GOD OF THUNDER. I'VE FOUND A GREAT LOVE FOR THIS RUGGED COUNTRYSIDE!"
THIS WON'T BE HARD FOR ME TO ADJUST TO!
NOT AT ALL!

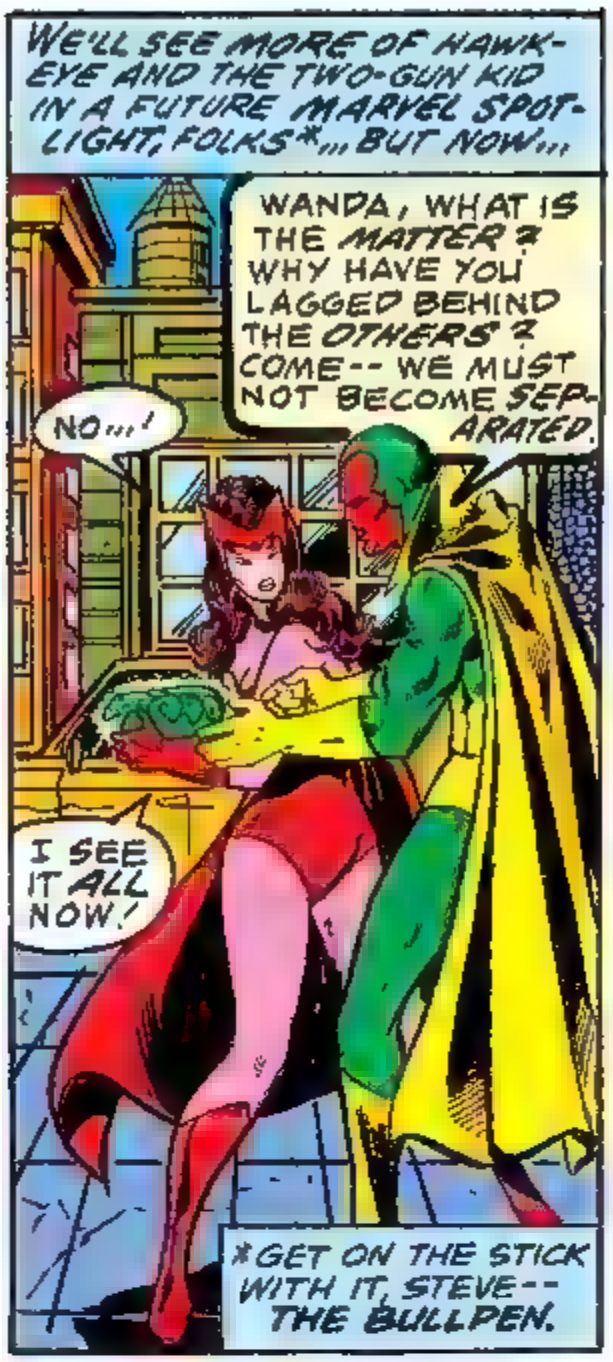
THIS IS IT, THEN, THOR! I HAVEN'T CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT LEAVIN' THE AVENGERS.
Y'SEE, I DUG THE WEST, TOO--
--AN' BEING A BOW-AND-ARROW MAN MAKES MORE SENSE OUT HERE THAN IN MANHATTAN!

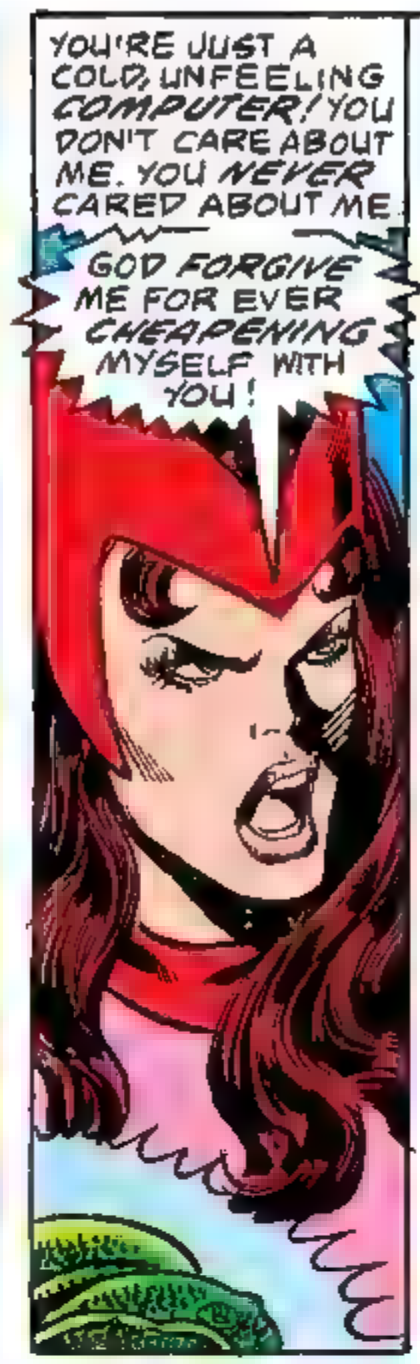

HEY, HAWKEYE!
WILD CAYUSES!

ON MY WAY--PARD!
I GOTTA GET GOIN', GOLDILOCKS! THE COWBOY AN' THE QUASI-INDIAN HAVE GOT A LOTTA SHAKIN' TO DO--
--IN THIS NECK O' THE WOODS WE'VE GOT ALL TO OURSELVES!

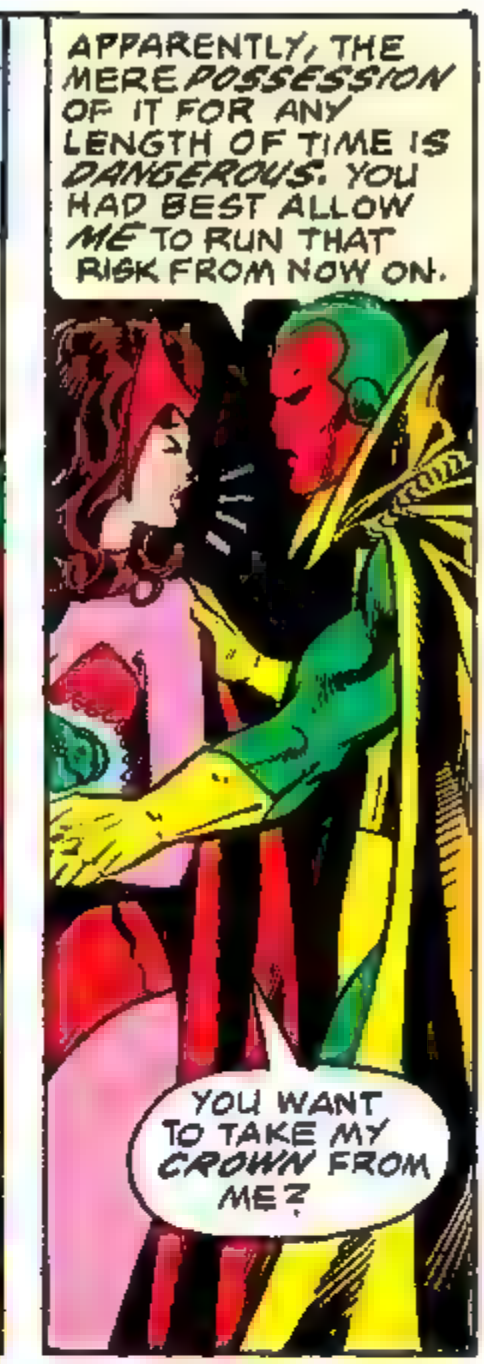
GIVE MY RE-GARDS TO THE OTHERS, AVENGER--
--AN' TELL 'EM NOT TO SHED ANY TEARS! I'M LEAVIN', BUT I'M NOT QUIT-TIN' THIS TIME!
IF YOU EVER NEED ME JUST HOLLER! C'MON, TWO-GUN! THE FIRST BRONC'S MINE!


THIS LIFE DOTH AGREE WITH HIM. I CANNOT FAULT HIS INTENT!
HAWKEYE HATH EVER BEEN A WILD, PROUD MAN!
PERHAPS, GODLING--
--BUT NOW, LET US SPEAK OF YOU!

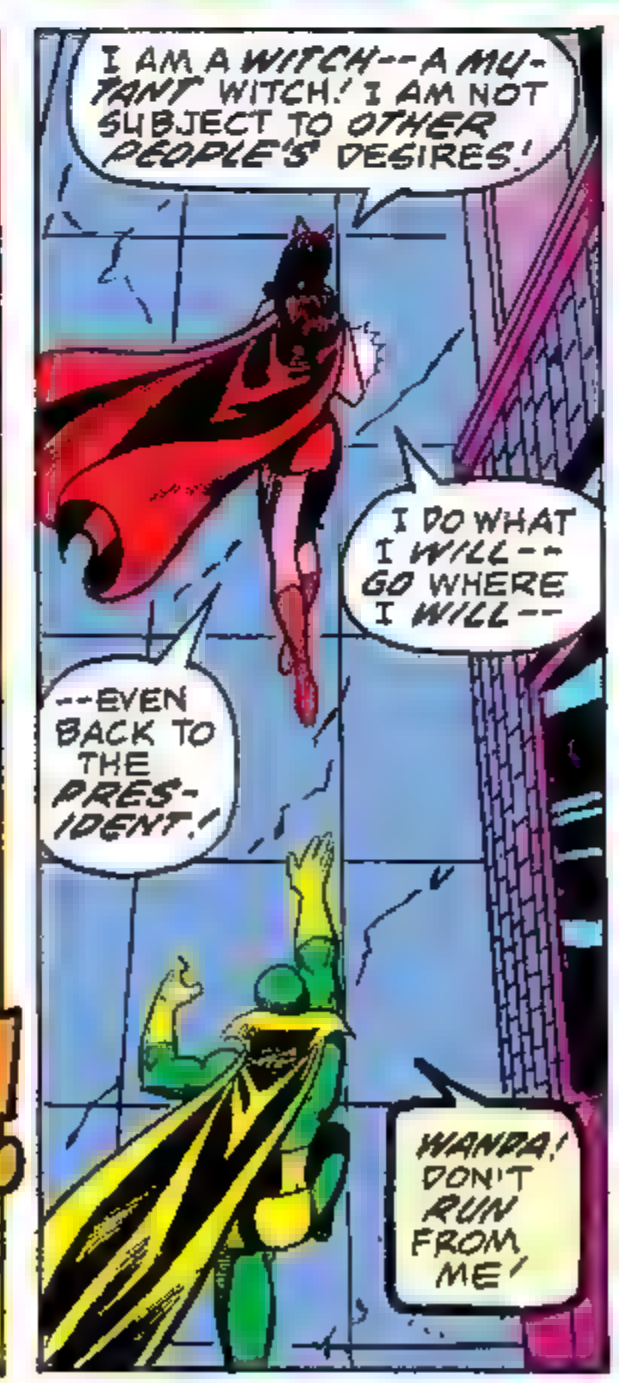

WE'LL SEE MORE OF HAWK-EYE AND THE TWO-GUN KID IN A FUTURE MARVEL SPOTLIGHT, FOLKS*... BUT NOW...
WANDA, WHAT IS THE MATTER? WHY HAVE YOU LAGGED BEHIND THE OTHERS? COME-- WE MUST NOT BECOME SEPARATED.
NO...!
I SEE IT ALL NOW!
*GET ON THE STICK WITH IT, STEVE-- THE BULLPEN.

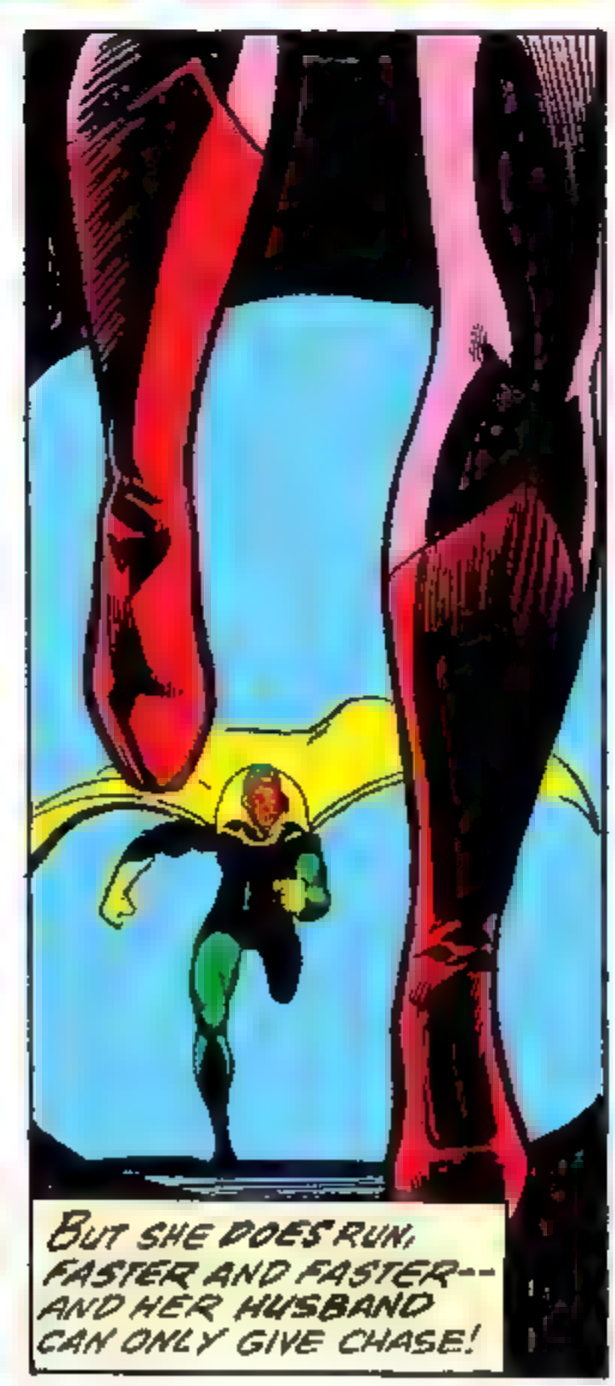

YOU'RE JUST A COLD, UNFEELING COMPUTER! YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME. YOU NEVER CARED ABOUT ME.
GOD FORGIVE ME FOR EVER CHEAPENING MYSELF WITH YOU!

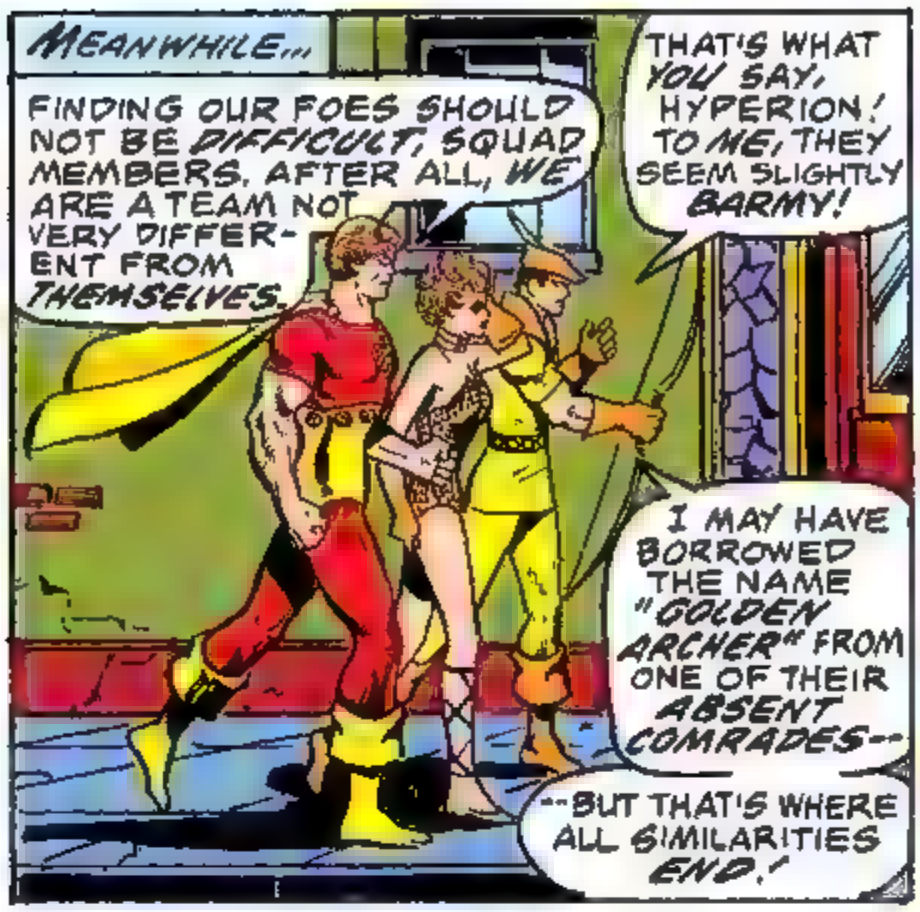
NOT FOR AN INSTANT DOES THE ANDROID AVENGER HESITATE IN HIS REPLY.
THIS IS THE SERPENT CROWN SPEAKING THROUGH YOU, MY DARLING--!


APPARENTLY, THE MERE POSSESSION OF IT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME IS DANGEROUS. YOU HAD BEST ALLOW ME TO RUN THAT RISK FROM NOW ON.
YOU WANT TO TAKE MY CROWN FROM ME?

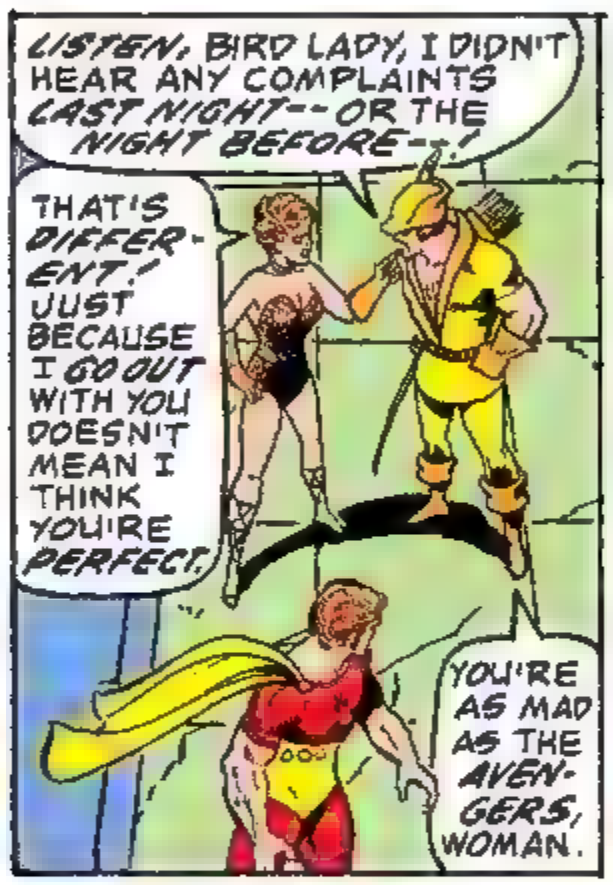
DON'T BE ABSURD!
FWAM!


I AM A WITCH--A MUTANT WITCH! I AM NOT SUBJECT TO OTHER PEOPLE'S DESIRES!
I DO WHAT I WILL-- GO WHERE I WILL--
--EVEN BACK TO THE PRESIDENT!
WANDA! DON'T RUN FROM ME!

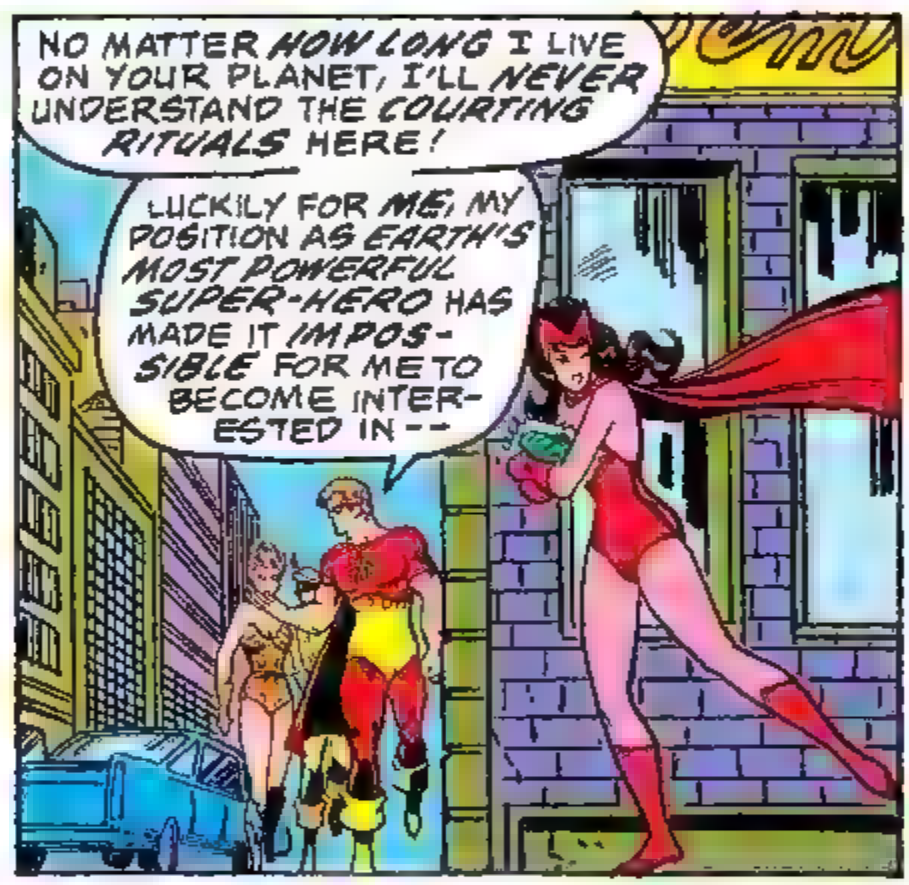

BUT SHE DOES RUN, FASTER AND FASTER-- AND HER HUSBAND CAN ONLY GIVE CHASE!


MEANWHILE...
FINDING OUR FOES SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT, SQUAD MEMBERS. AFTER ALL, WE ARE A TEAM NOT VERY DIFFERENT FROM THEMSELVES.
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY, HYPERION! TO ME, THEY SEEM SLIGHTLY BARMY!
I MAY HAVE BORROWED THE NAME "GOLDEN ARCHER" FROM ONE OF THEIR ABSENT COMRADES--
--BUT THAT'S WHERE ALL SIMILARITIES END!

TRUST YOU TO OVER-DRAMATIZE!
YOUR BRASHNESS I CAN STAND--YOUR COCKINESS I LOVE--
--BUT YOUR INTENSITY WEARS A LITTLE THIN AFTER A TIME!
WHA-AT?


LISTEN, BIRD LADY, I DIDN'T HEAR ANY COMPLAINTS LAST NIGHT--OR THE NIGHT BEFORE--!
THAT'S DIFFERENT! JUST BECAUSE I GO OUT WITH YOU DOESN'T MEAN I THINK YOU'RE PERFECT.
YOU'RE AS MAD AS THE AVENGERS, WOMAN.

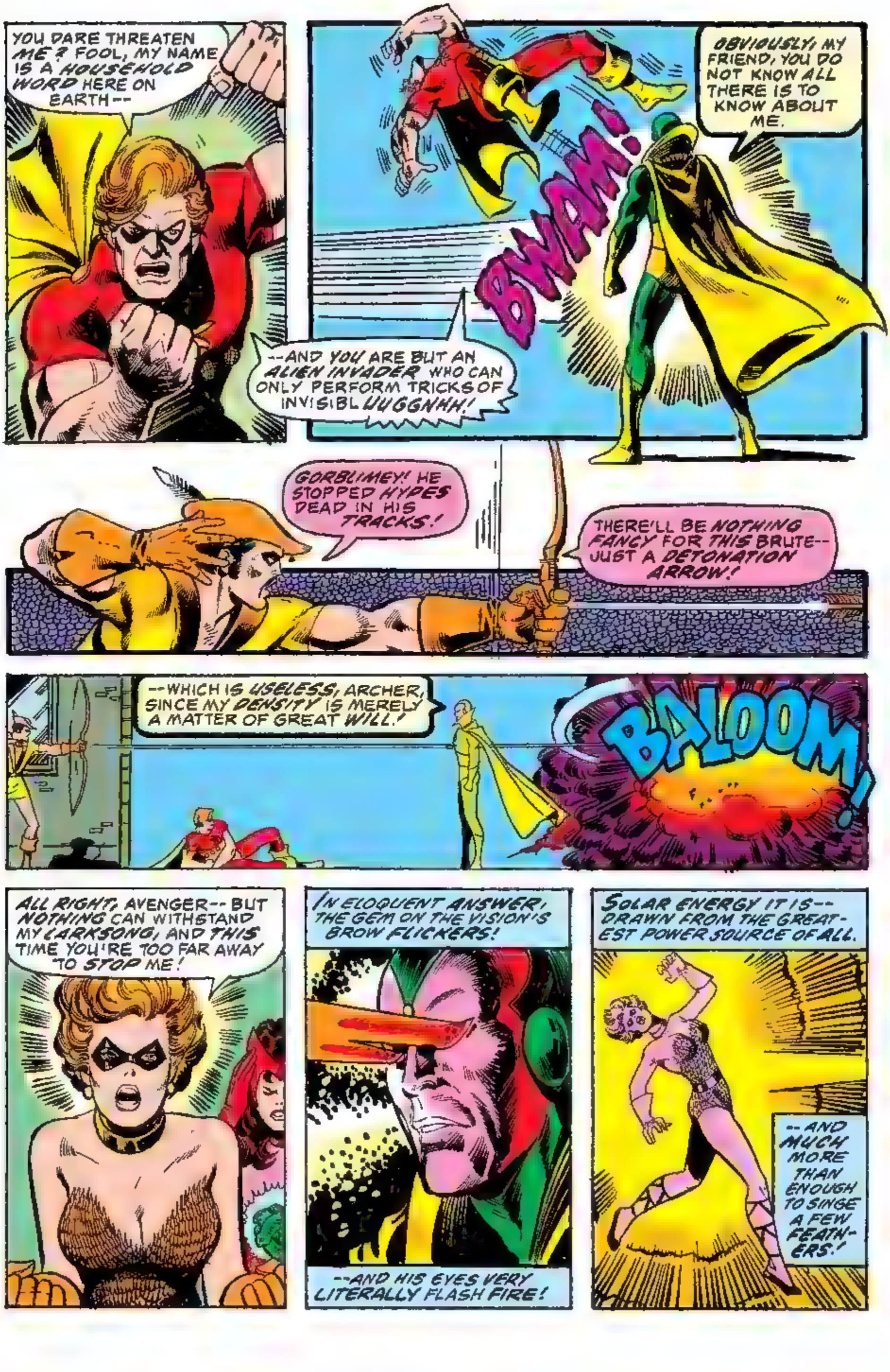
QUIET, YOU LOVEBIRDS! WE HAVE A JOB TO DO HERE!

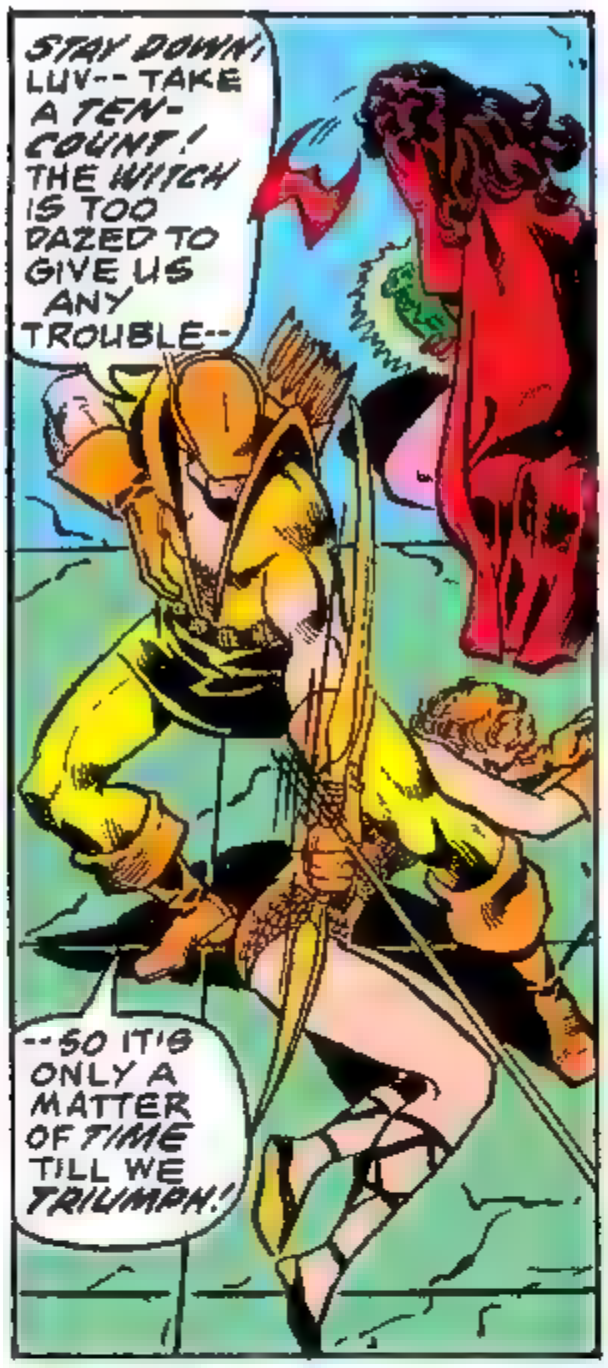

NO MATTER HOW LONG I LIVE ON YOUR PLANET, I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND THE COURTING RITUALS HERE!
LUCKILY FOR ME, MY POSITION AS EARTH'S MOST POWERFUL SUPER-HERO HAS MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO BECOME INTERESTED IN--

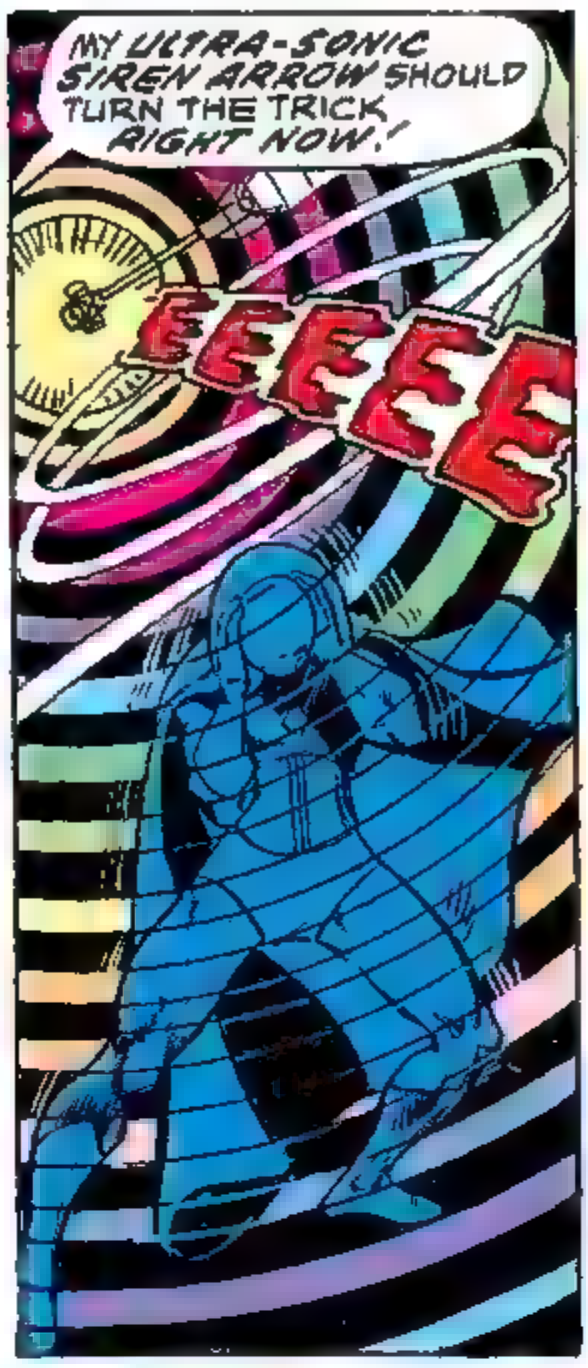
--WOMEN--
HELIUM AND ARGON! IT'S THE ONE WE SEEK--
--THE SCARLET WITCH!

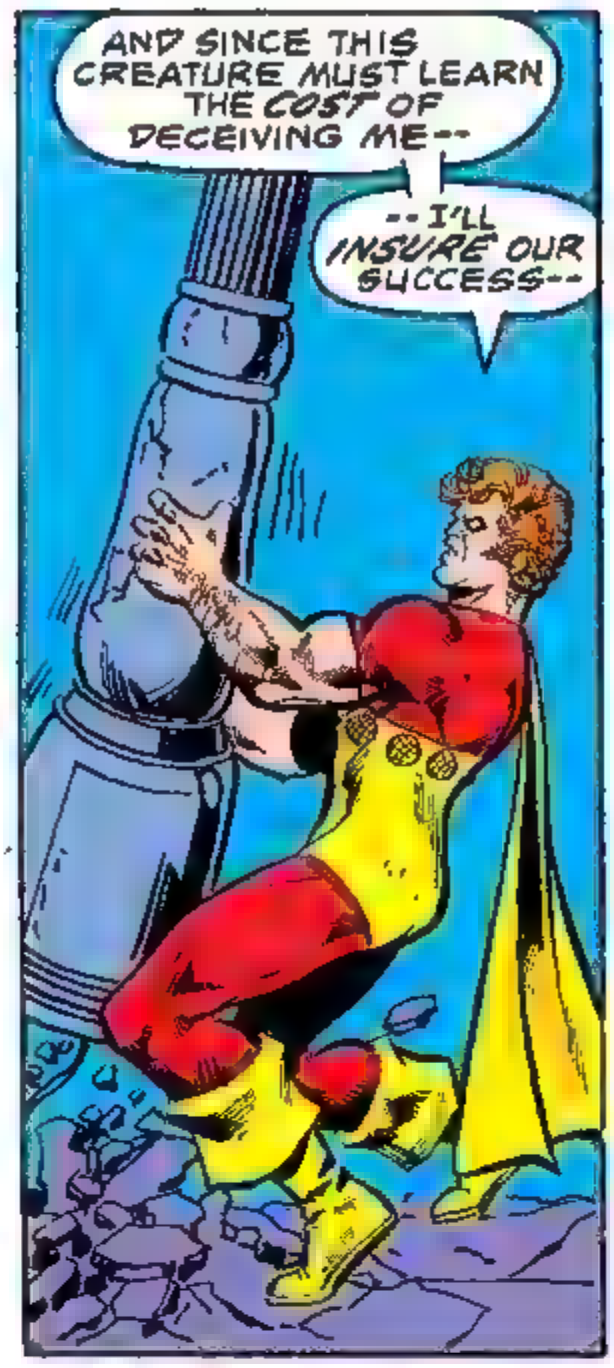
YET THE SQUAD MEMBERS CANNOT LONG ENJOY THEIR GOOD FORTUNE--FOR SUDDENLY, A CHILL VOICE KNIFES THRU THEIR SOULS!

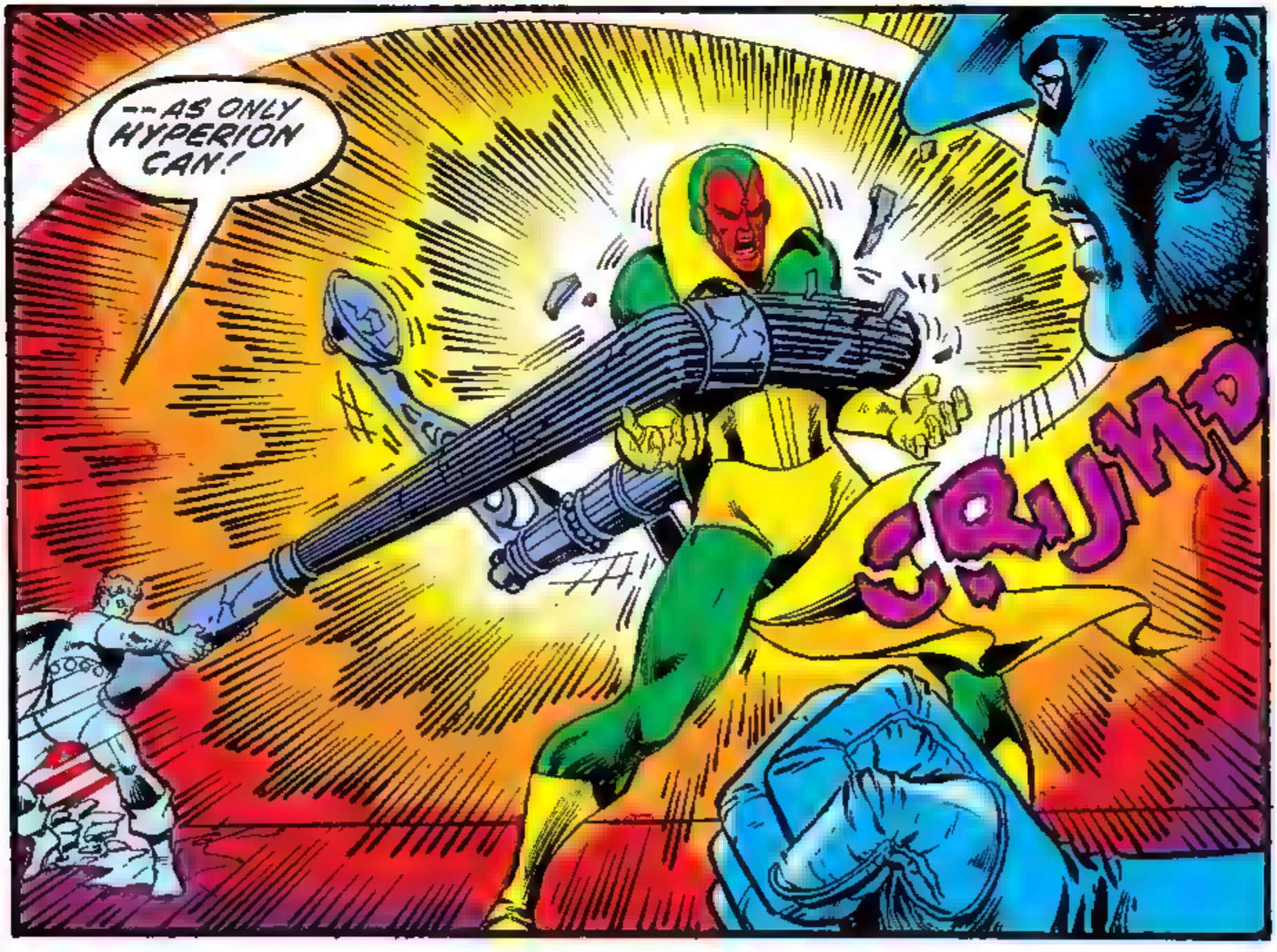
UNHAND HER, HYPERION--NOW!!


YOU DARE THREATEN ME? FOOL, MY NAME IS A HOUSEHOLD WORD HERE ON EARTH--
--AND YOU ARE BUT AN ALIEN INVADER WHO CAN ONLY PERFORM TRICKS OF INVISIBL UUGGNHH!
BWAM!
OBVIOUSLY, MY FRIEND, YOU DO NOT KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT ME.
GORBLIMEY! HE STOPPED HYPES DEAD IN HIS TRACKS!
THERE'LL BE NOTHING FANCY FOR THIS BRUTE-- JUST A DETONATION ARROW!
--WHICH IS USELESS, ARCHER, SINCE MY DENSITY IS MERELY A MATTER OF GREAT WILL!
BALOOM!
ALL RIGHT, AVENGER-- BUT NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND MY LARKSONG, AND THIS TIME YOU'RE TOO FAR AWAY TO STOP ME!
IN ELOQUENT ANSWER, THE GEM ON THE VISION'S BROW FLICKERS!
--AND HIS EYES VERY LITERALLY FLASH FIRE!
SOLAR ENERGY IT IS-- DRAWN FROM THE GREATEST POWER SOURCE OF ALL.
--AND MUCH MORE THAN ENOUGH TO SINGE A FEW FEATHERS!


STAY DOWN, LUV-- TAKE A TEN-COUNT! THE WITCH IS TOO DAZED TO GIVE US ANY TROUBLE--
--SO IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME TILL WE TRIUMPH!

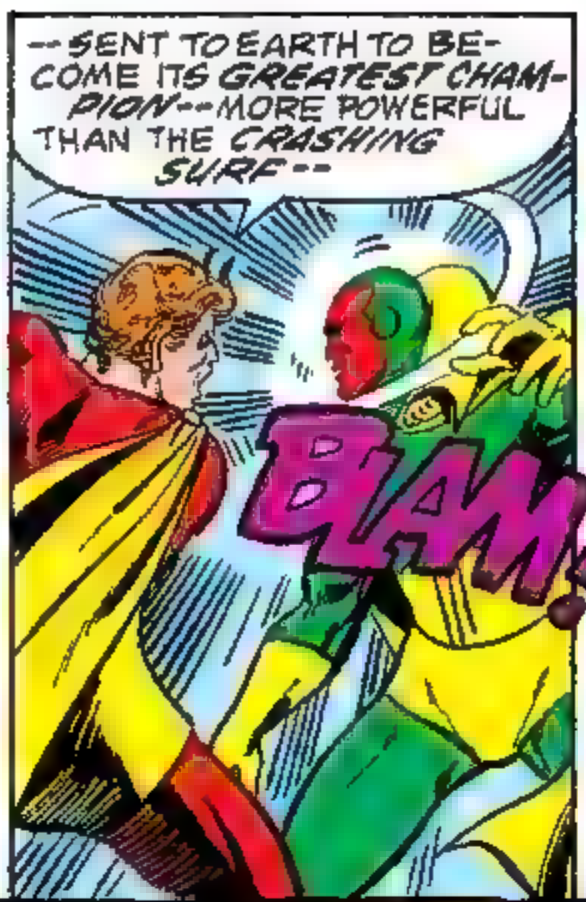

MY ULTRA-SONIC SIREN ARROW SHOULD TURN THE TRICK RIGHT NOW!
EEEEE


AND SINCE THIS CREATURE MUST LEARN THE COST OF DECEIVING ME--
--I'LL INSURE OUR SUCCESS--


--AS ONLY HYPERION CAN!
WHUMP

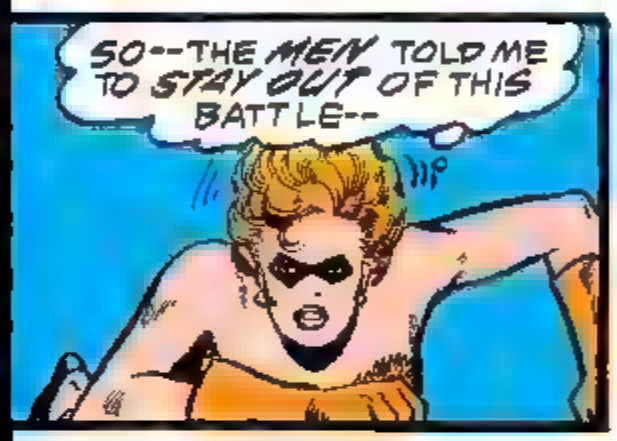
CAUGHT BY SURPRISE, THE VISION FALLS, AND THINGS LOOK DARK INDEED... BUT HIS IS NOT THE ONLY BATTLE HERE!
SILENTLY, UNNOTICED--
--PERHAPS A GREATER WAR IS BEING WAGED--
--BETWEEN A DRIVING, DEMANDING MIND OF EVIL--
--AND A VERY, VERY NEW, YOUNG WITCH!
I USED THIS TECHNIQUE AGAINST MY ARCH-FOE, BURBANK, THE FIRST TIME I CAME TO COSMOPOLIS, CREATURE! I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT IT ONE OF MY BEST!
HOW WONDERFUL
HYPES, DID ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOUR SUPER-POWERS END AT THE NECK?
DIDN'T YOU HEAR THE BLIGHTER SAY HE COULD CONTROL HIS DENSITY?
BUT-- BUT--
BLIMEY! HE COULD BE ANYWHERE!
KZAK!

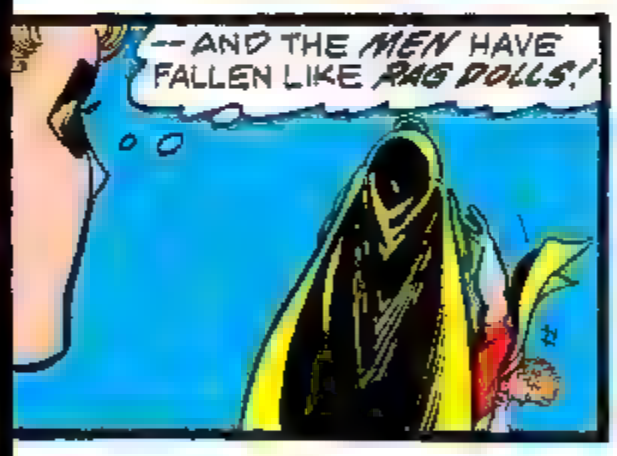
YOU--HUMBLED ME, AVENGER--
--SOMETHING NO MAN OR CREATURE HAS EVER DONE--OR WILL EVER DO--A SECOND TIME!
I AM HYPERION--


--SENT TO EARTH TO BECOME ITS GREATEST CHAMPION--MORE POWERFUL THAN THE CRASHING SURF--
BLAM!

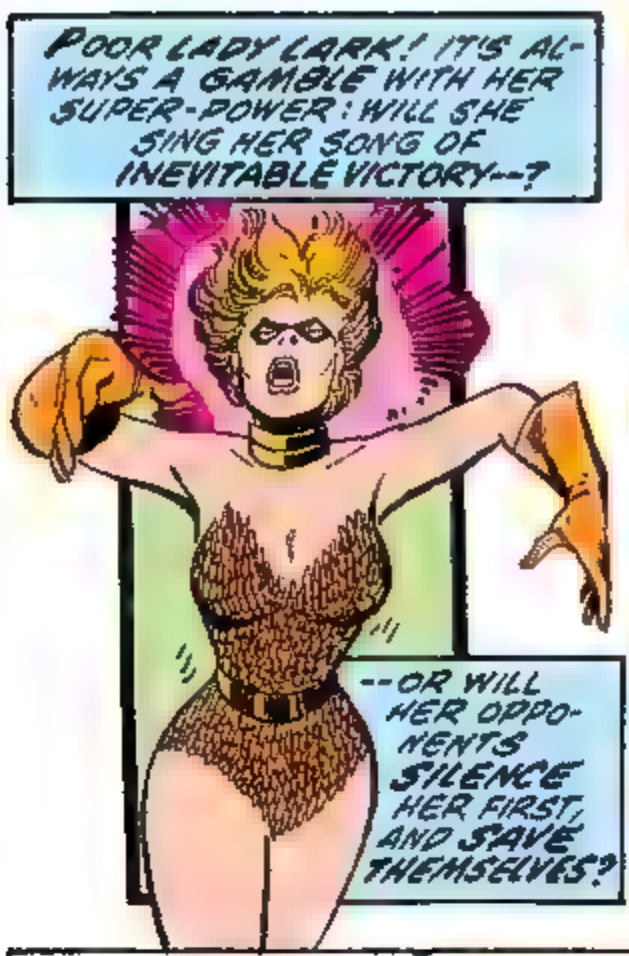
--ABLE TO FLY, TO SEE THRU WALLS, BEND TITANIUM WITH MY BARE HANDS!
I AM INVINCIBLE--INVULNERABLE!
BOM!
ARE YOU, HYPERION? EVEN WHEN YOU FACE--

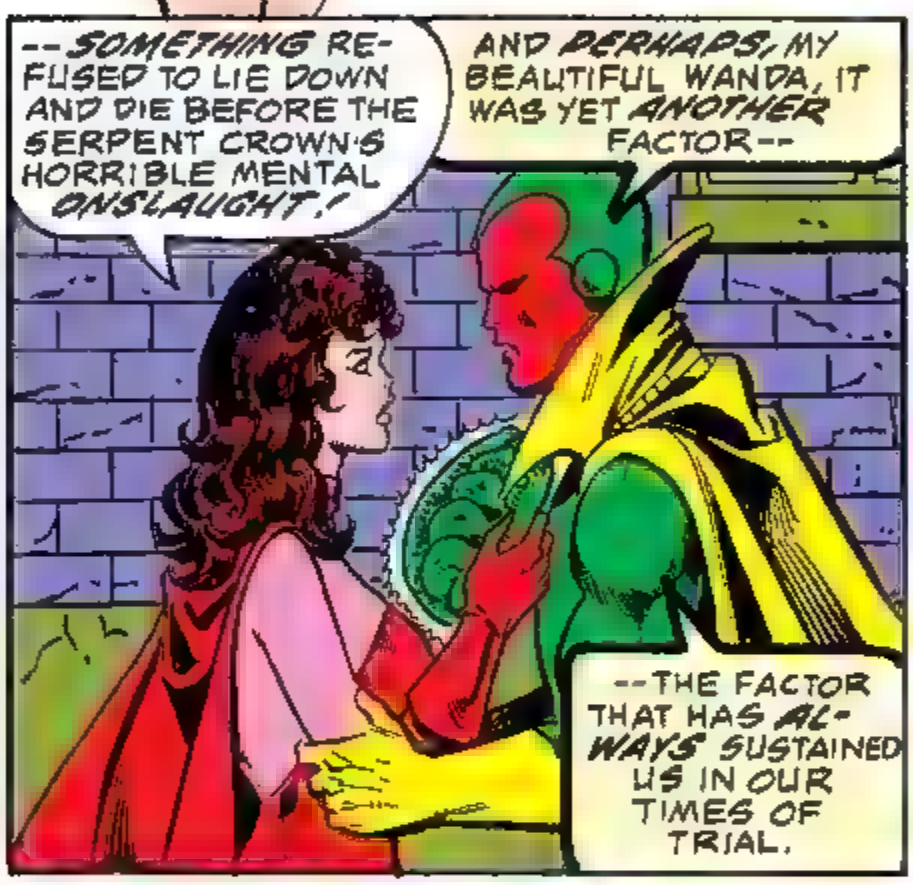
--THE UNEARTHLY POWERS OF THE VISION?!
THERE IS NO MATERIAL OBJECT I CANNOT ENTER--AND DISRUPT!


SO--THE MEN TOLD ME TO STAY OUT OF THIS BATTLE--


--AND THE MEN HAVE FALLEN LIKE RAG DOLLS!

THE BALANCE OF POWER BELONGS TO LADY LARK, THEN--AND SHE IS MORE THAN ABLE TO MAKE USE OF IT!





NEXT: 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER JUSTICE!

STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
148
JUNE
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
STAND ASIDE, AVENGERS! THE SQUADRON SUPREME IS TAKING OVER!
IT'S ACTION ALL THE WAY! 'NUFF SAID!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

JV 303

MEMBERSHIP
SQUADRON SUPREME

HYPERION

DR. SPECTRUM

GOLDEN ARCHER

LADY LARK

CAP'N HAWK

WHIZZER

AMPHIBION

TOM THUMB

WELCOME, DEAR READER! RIGHT NOW, THE INVADING AVENGERS ARE RUNNING RAMPANT ON THIS PLANET THEY CALL OTHER EARTH -- BUT DON'T DESPAIR! HOW LONG CAN THEY HOPE TO ESCAPE THE MIGHT OF OUR OWN...

IN A FEAR-FRAUGHT EPIC WE CALL...

20,000 LEAGUES UNDER JUSTICE!

SQUADRON SUPREME

GOOD WORK, SQUADRON! YOUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE IS PROUD OF YOU!

STEVE ENGLEHART, *Writer*
GEORGE PEREZ } *Artists*
S. GRAINGER
MARV WOLFMAN, *Editor*

TOM ORZECHOWSKI, *letterer*
HUGH PALEY, *colorist*

MEMBERSHIP
AVENGERS

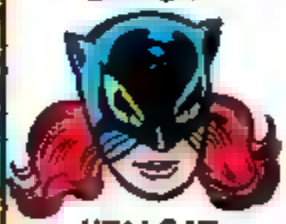
CAPTAIN AMERICA

IRON MAN

VISION

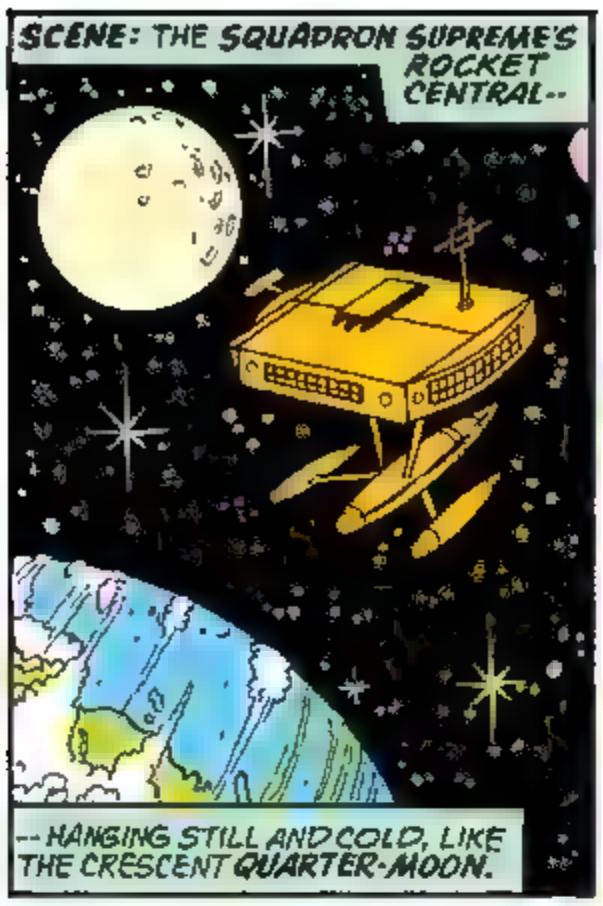
SCARLET WITCH

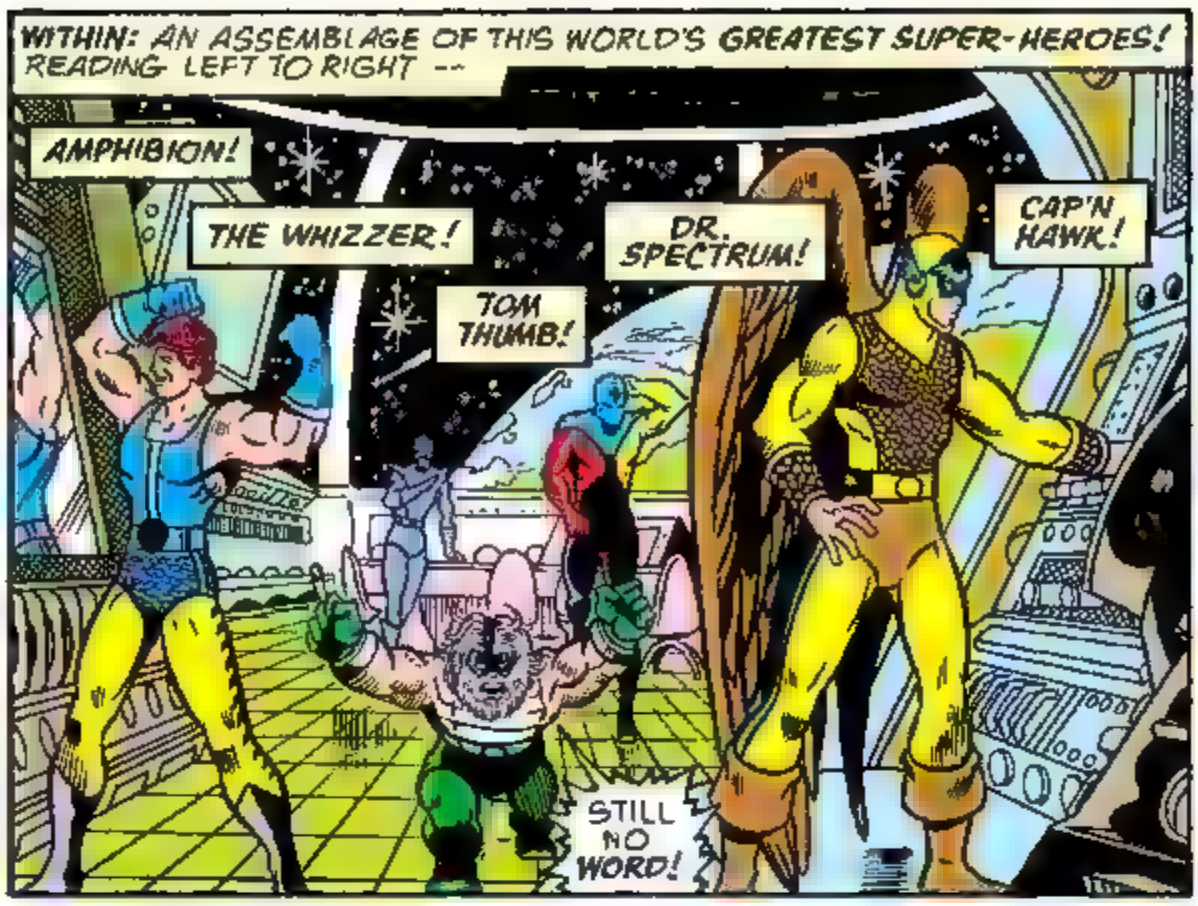
BEAST


HELLCAT

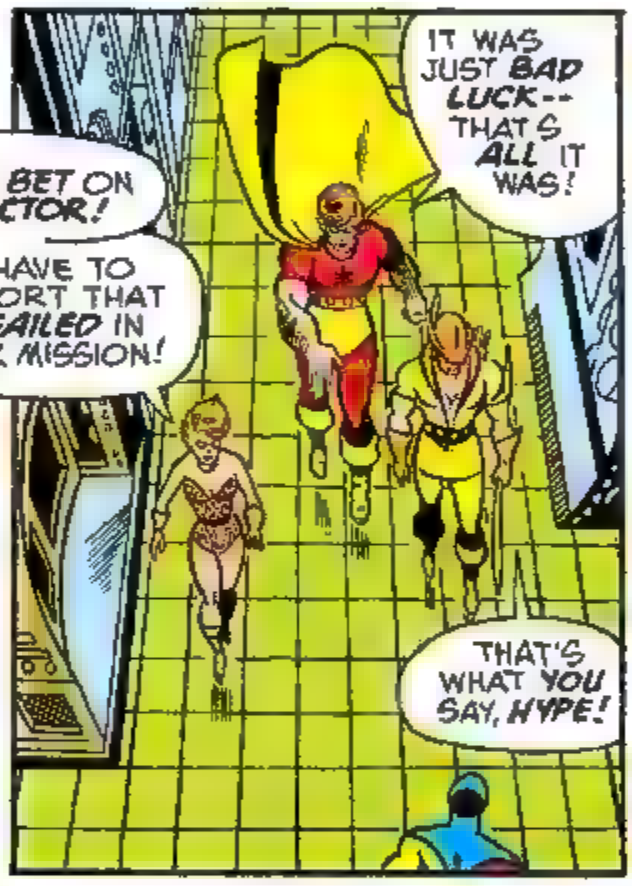
MOONDRAGON

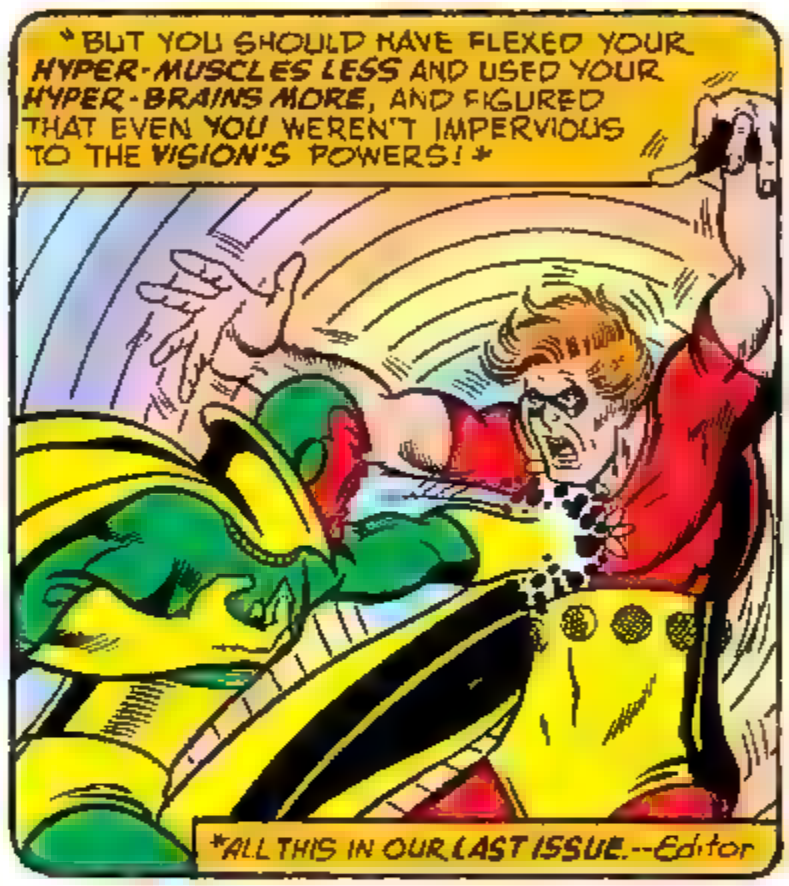
THOR


SCENE: THE SQUADRON SUPREME'S ROCKET CENTRAL--
--HANGING STILL AND COLD, LIKE THE CRESCENT QUARTER-MOON.


WITHIN: AN ASSEMBLAGE OF THIS WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES! READING LEFT TO RIGHT --
AMPHIBION!
THE WHIZZER!
TOM THUMB!
DR. SPECTRUM!
CAP'N HAWK!
STILL NO WORD!

RELAX, TOMMY! HYPERION, LADY LARK, AND THE GOLDEN ARCHER ARE SURE TO CATCH --
DON'T BET ON IT, DOCTOR!
I HAVE TO REPORT THAT WE FAILED IN OUR MISSION!


IT WAS JUST BAD LUCK-- THAT'S ALL IT WAS!
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY, HYPE!

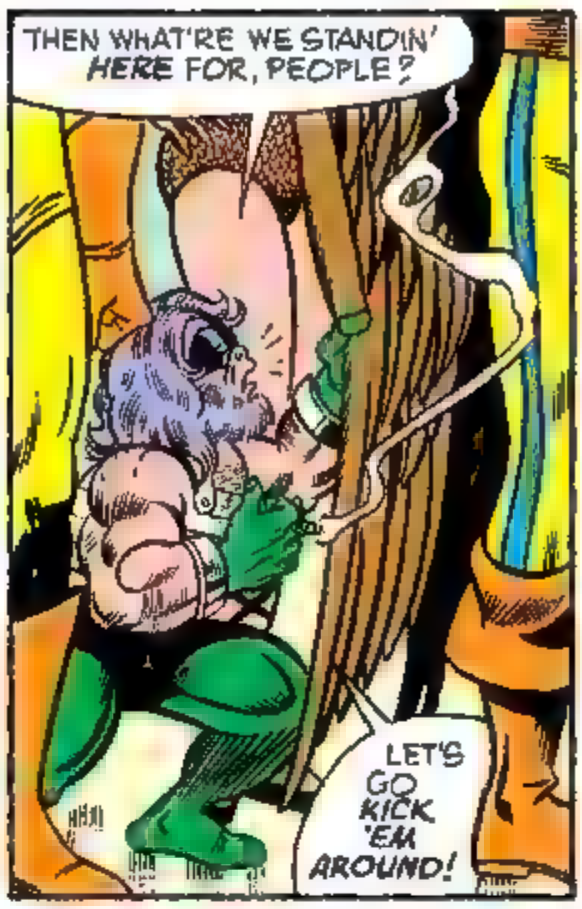

"BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE FLEXED YOUR HYPER-MUSCLES LESS AND USED YOUR HYPER-BRAINS MORE, AND FIGURED THAT EVEN YOU WEREN'T IMPERVIOUS TO THE VISION'S POWERS!*
*ALL THIS IN OUR LAST ISSUE.--Editor

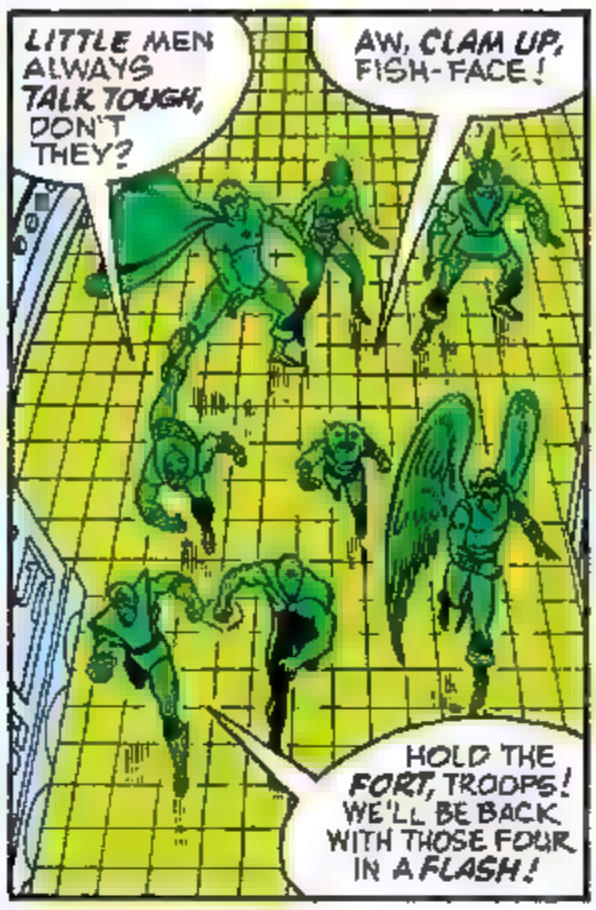
"OF COURSE, MY LADY AND I FELL, TOO-- BUT WE WERE BOTH VICTIMS OF SURPRISE! FRANKLY, I THOUGHT THE SCARLET WITCH WAS TOO DAZED TO FIGHT!"

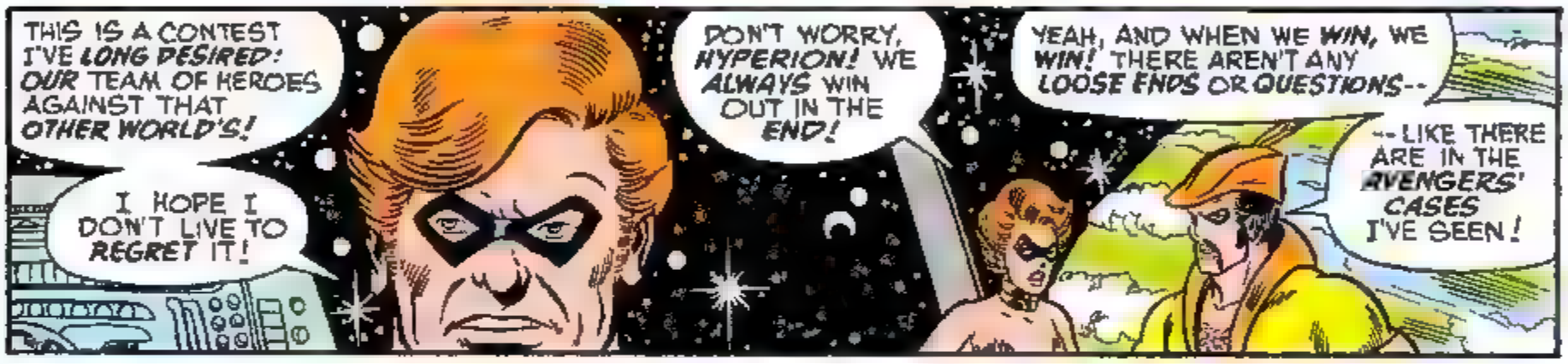
LET IT PASS, ARCHER! THE POINT IS, THEY STILL HAVE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER'S SERPENT CROWN!
YEAH! I WONDER WHY THAT THING'S SO VALUABLE, THOUGH.
OURS IS NOT TO QUESTION WHY, HONEY.

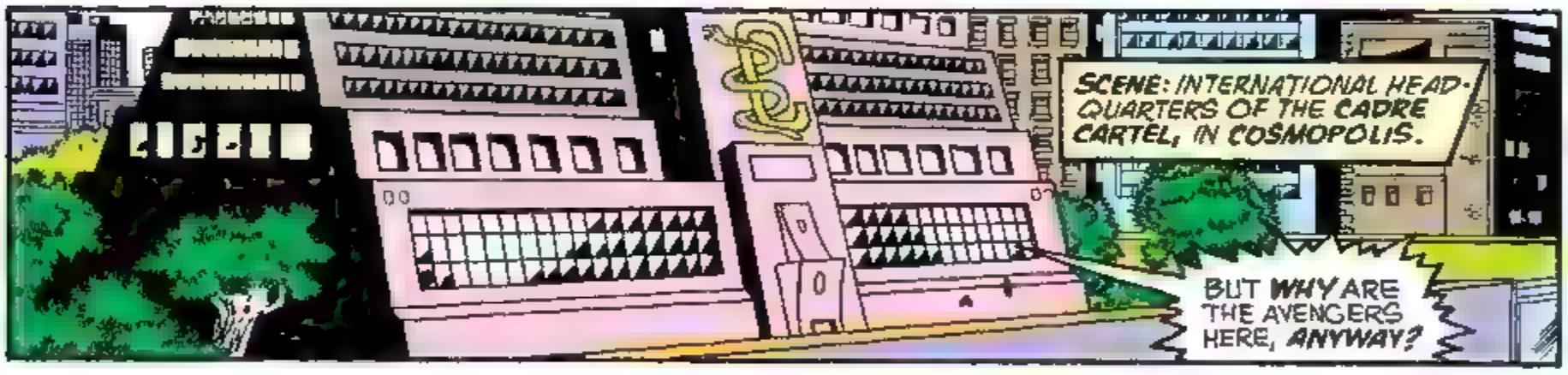
NO, OURS IS TO GET THAT ANCIENT TALISMAN BACK--
--AND LOOK WHAT OUR SPY-EYE IN THE SKY HAS SPOTTED NOW!

THE OTHER AVENGERS! WHAT GOOD WILL THEY DO US?
A BIRD IN THE HAND IS WORTH RANSOM! TRUST CAP'N HAWK TO KNOW THAT, SPECTRUM!


THEN WHAT'RE WE STANDIN' HERE FOR, PEOPLE?
LET'S GO KICK 'EM AROUND!


LITTLE MEN ALWAYS TALK TOUGH, DON'T THEY?
AW, CLAM UP, FISH-FACE!
HOLD THE FORT, TROOPS! WE'LL BE BACK WITH THOSE FOUR IN A FLASH!


THIS IS A CONTEST I'VE LONG DESIRED: OUR TEAM OF HEROES AGAINST THAT OTHER WORLD'S!
I HOPE I DON'T LIVE TO REGRET IT!
DON'T WORRY, HYPERION! WE ALWAYS WIN OUT IN THE END!
YEAH, AND WHEN WE WIN, WE WIN! THERE AREN'T ANY LOOSE ENDS OR QUESTIONS--
--LIKE THERE ARE IN THE AVENGERS' CASES I'VE SEEN!


SCENE: INTERNATIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE CADRE CARTEL, IN COSMOPOLIS.
BUT WHY ARE THE AVENGERS HERE, ANYWAY?

WHY EVEN INVOLVE THEM IN OUR AFFAIRS?
THAT DECISION WAS MADE BY THE SERPENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THEIR WORLD, GENTLEMEN--AS WAS HIS RIGHT!
NEED I REMIND YOU THAT THE COUNTRY YOUR CORPORATIONS AND MINE RUN OUT THERE--

--WAS CAPTURED FOR US BY THE CROWN'S ALIEN BRILLIANCE! NOW IT WISHES TO EXTEND ITS CONTROL TO THE AVENGERS' EARTH--
--AND THEIR EXECUTIVES FACE THE SAME PROBLEMS WE ONCE DID!

"WE'RE *CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY*, GENTLEMEN! *GENERALS* WAGE WAR ON THE *BATTLEFIELD*, AND *WE* WAGE WAR IN THE *MARKETPLACE!* IF ONE OF OUR *ALLIES* FELT WE COULD HANDLE HIS ENEMIES BETTER THAN *HE*, THEN *I*, FOR ONE, TAKE THAT AS A *COMPLIMENT!*

THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY: PART II

"BESIDES, THE *SQUADRON SUPREME* WILL BE DOING ALL THE FIGHTING!"

CAP'N HAWK, TOM THUMB AND AMPHIBION VS. THE BEAST AND HELLCAT

THERE'S *NO TRACE* OF *WANDA* AND *THE VISION!* IT'S LIKE THEY VANISHED INTO *THIN AIR*-- AND WE *HAVE* TO *FIND* THEM!

IRON MAN AND I WILL SEARCH IN THE *NORTH* AND *EAST*, *BEAST!*

ROGER WILCO, CAP! THE *HELLCAT* AND *I* WILL GO THE *OTHER* WAY--

--AND *WE'LL* BE IN SCOTLAND *AFORE* YA!

I WONDER IF THIS WORLD *HAS* A SCOTLAND, *PATSY*-- OR *SCOTT TOWELS*, FOR THAT MATTER!

THOUGH AT THE *MOMENT*, TRUTH TO TELL I'M JUST GLAD THE PRESIDENT'S FEAR FOR HIS *CROWN* HAS SCOTCHED HIS ARMY'S *SEARCH* FOR US!

LISTEN, BEAST, YOU CAN MAKE ALL THE *PUNS* YOU *WANT*-- BUT I'VE TOLD YOU *BEFORE* NOT TO CALL ME *PATSY!*

I'M A *SUPER-HEROINE* NOW--!

YEAH, BUT DON'T FORGET WHO *PROMOTED* THE WHOLE DEAL FOR YOU, LADY!

DON'T JIVE *ME, PATSY WALKER!*

I KNEW YOU *WHEN!*

OH *YEAH?* WELL, YOU MAY *THINK*, JUST BECAUSE I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH CHANCE TO USE MY *POWERS* YET THAT I CAN BE *PUSHED AROUND!*

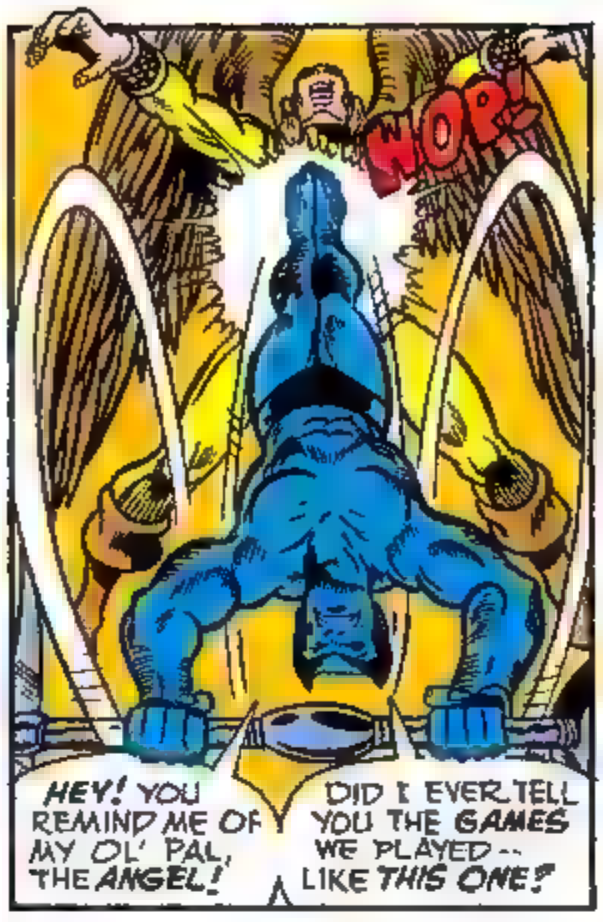
WELL, *NUTS TO YOU*, BUSTER!

THE *HELLCAT'S* READY TO PROVE HERSELF *ANY TIME* AND *ANY PLACE!*

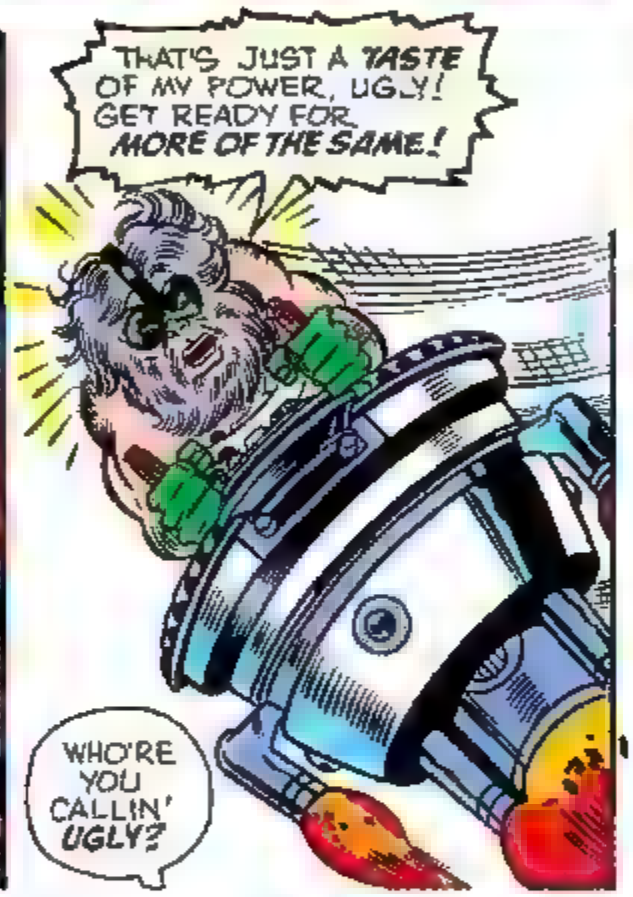
GOT IT?

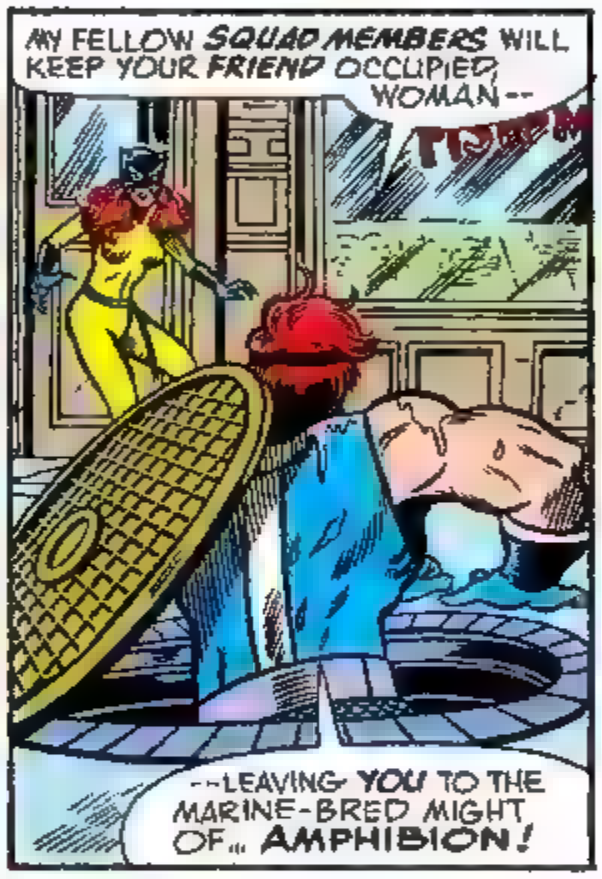
PATSY! LOOK OUT!

WH--?
WHAM!


WOP!
HEY! YOU REMIND ME OF MY OL' PAL, THE ANGEL!
DID I EVER TELL YOU THE GAMES WE PLAYED -- LIKE THIS ONE?

WE WERE REAL GOOD PALS--
HOLY HANNAH!
LAK!


THAT'S JUST A TASTE OF MY POWER, UGLY! GET READY FOR MORE OF THE SAME!
WHO'RE YOU CALLIN' UGLY?


MY FELLOW SQUAD MEMBERS WILL KEEP YOUR FRIEND OCCUPIED, WOMAN--
--LEAVING YOU TO THE MARINE-BRED MIGHT OF... AMPHIBION!

IT'S NOT OUR HABIT ON THIS EARTH TO HARM THE WEAKER SEX--
--SO WHY NOT SIMPLY SURRENDER?

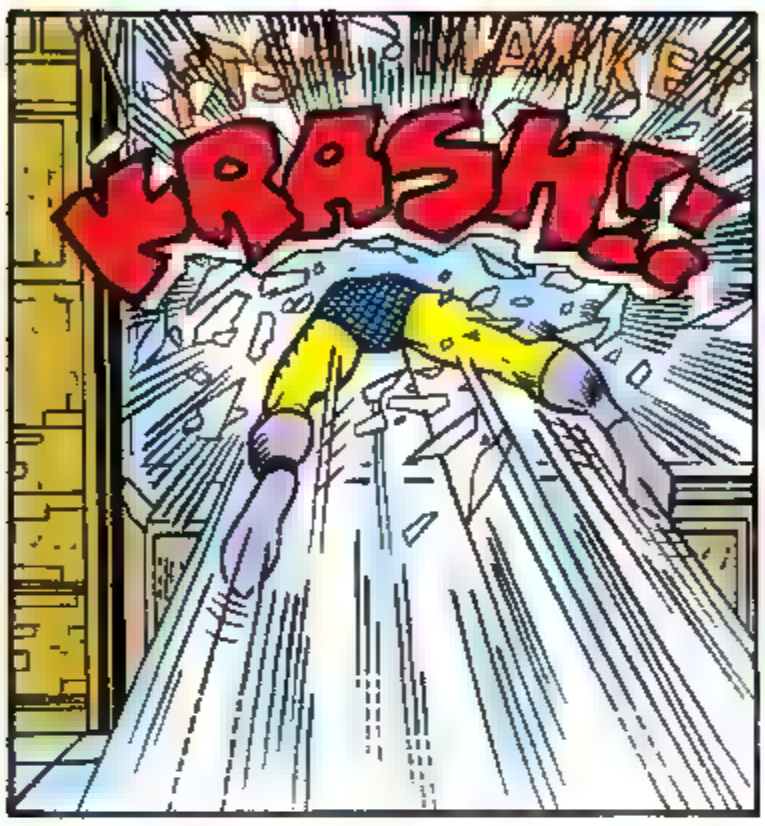
YOU KNOW, AMPHY, I'M NOT A BIG WOMEN'S-LIBBER--
--AND YOU'RE PROBABLY THE HANDSOMEST MAN I'VE SEEN IN WEEKS--

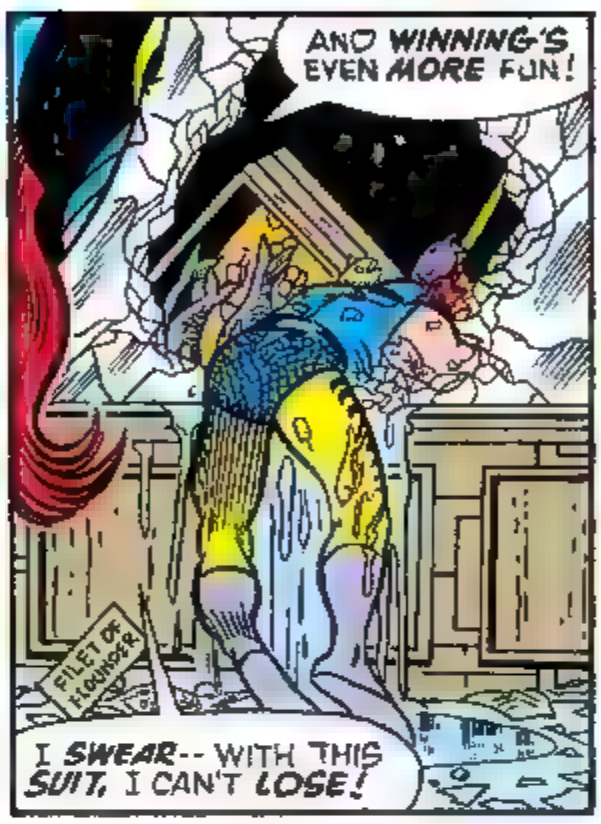
TOK!
--BUT I'M GONNA LAY YOU OUT FOR THAT!

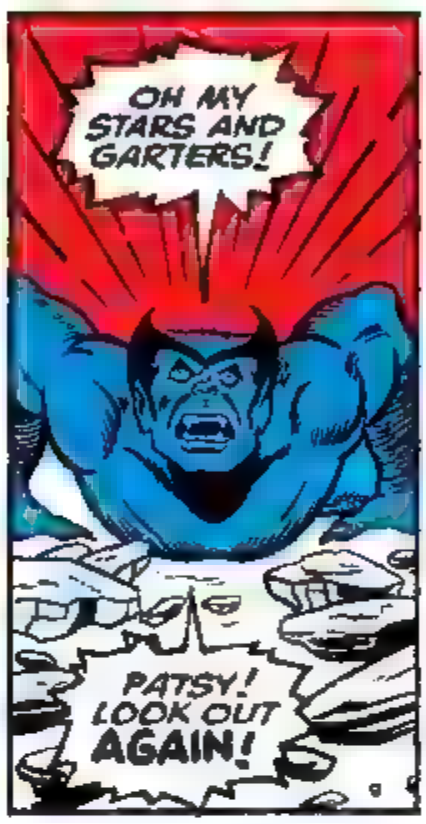
BY MY MOTHER'S HUMAN HERITAGE! NO ONE TREATS THE KING OF THE SEVEN SEAS LIKE THAT! I'LL ---

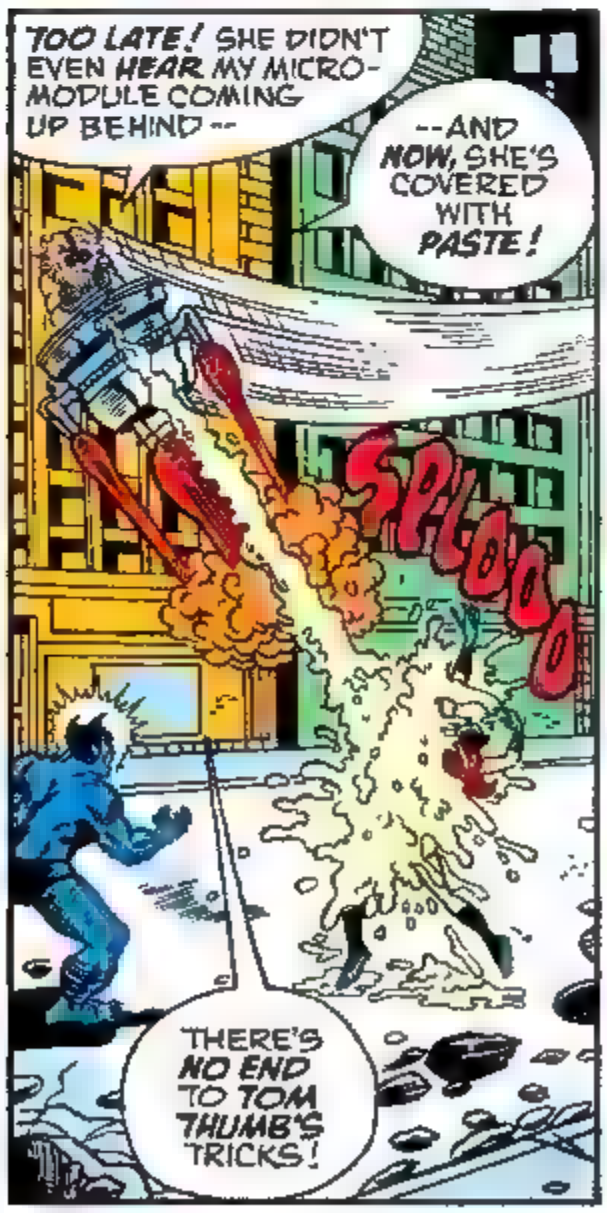
--FLOP AROUND LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER, TRYING TO CATCH A HELLCAT!

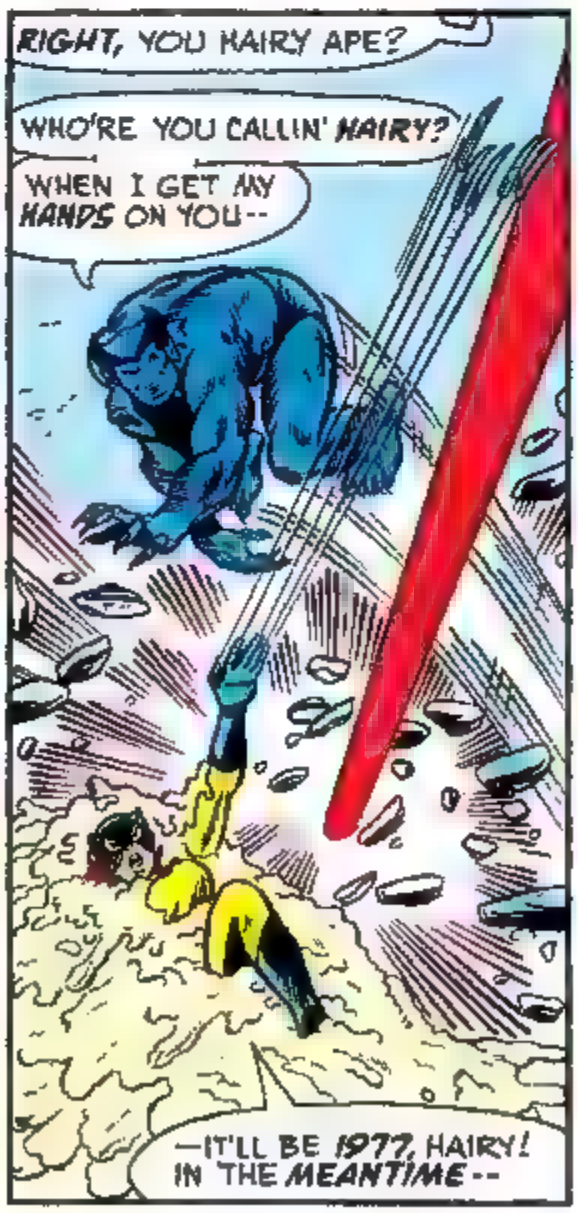
SAY! MAKING JOKES WHILE YOU FIGHT IS FUN!

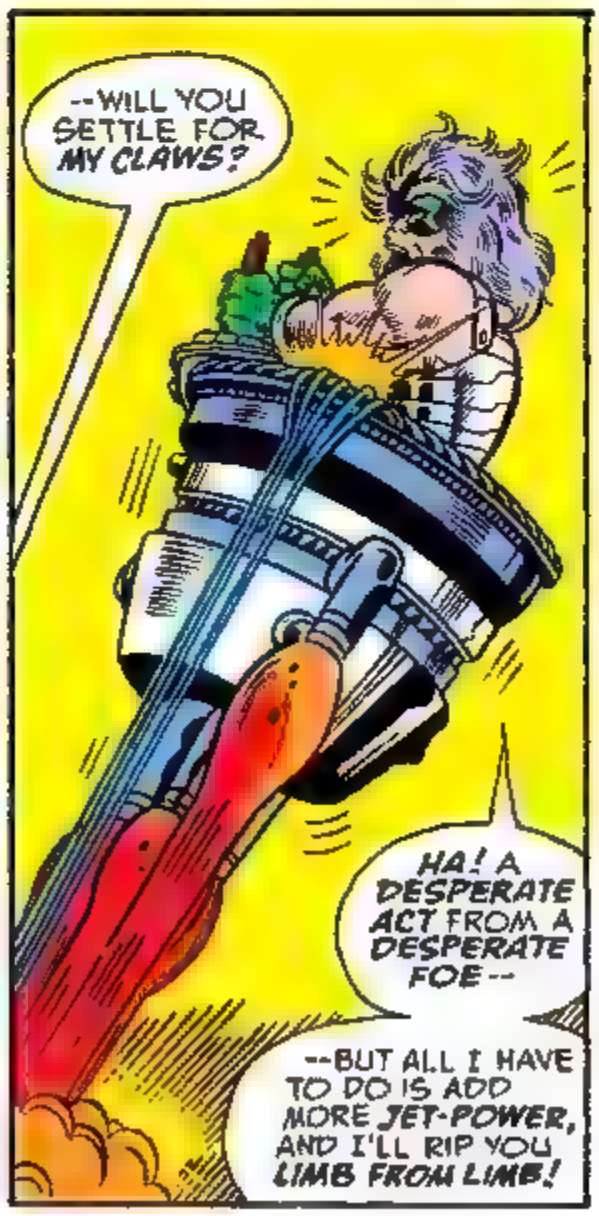




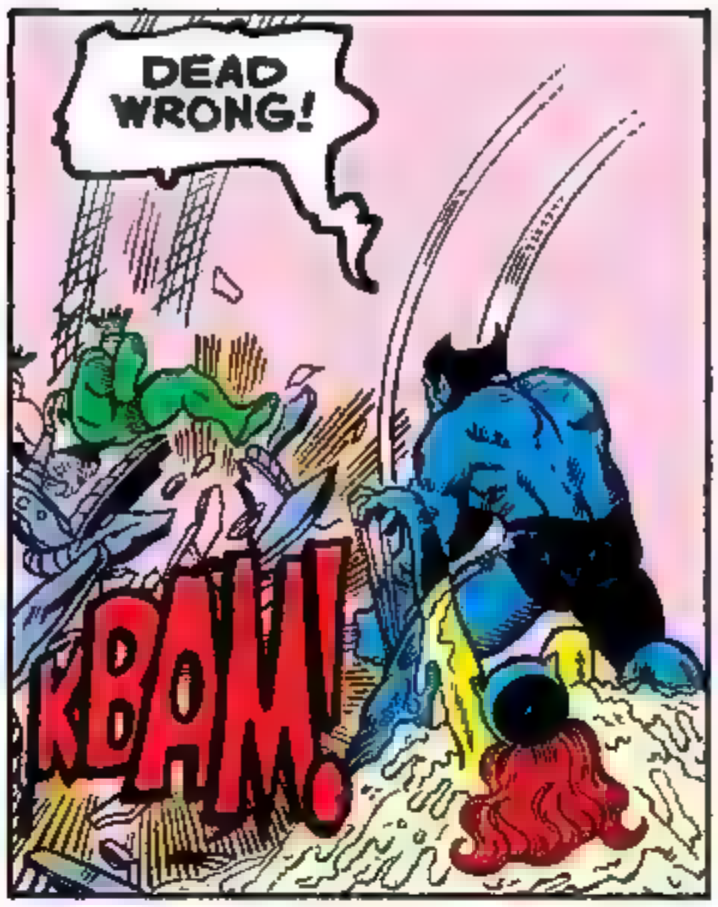






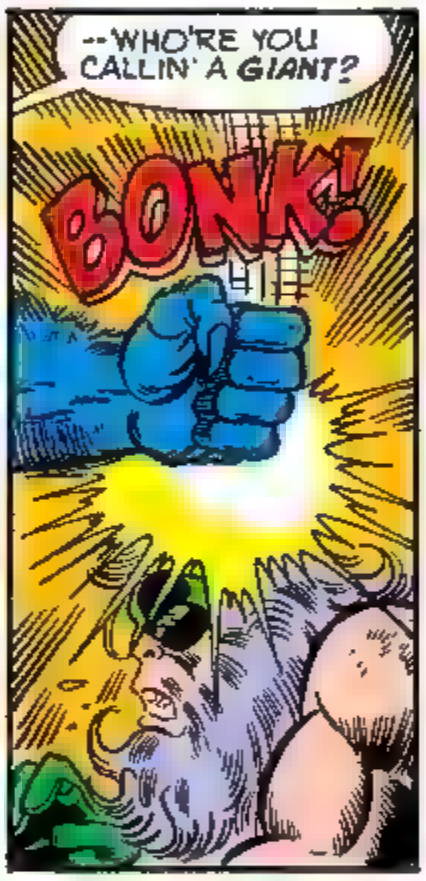


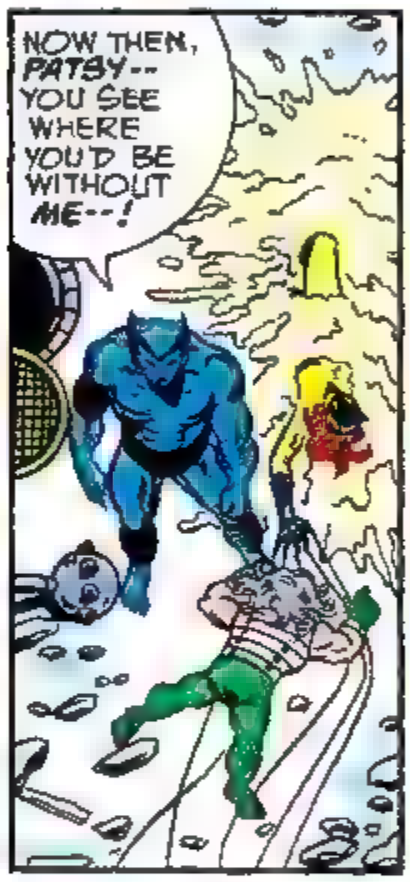
WRONG!

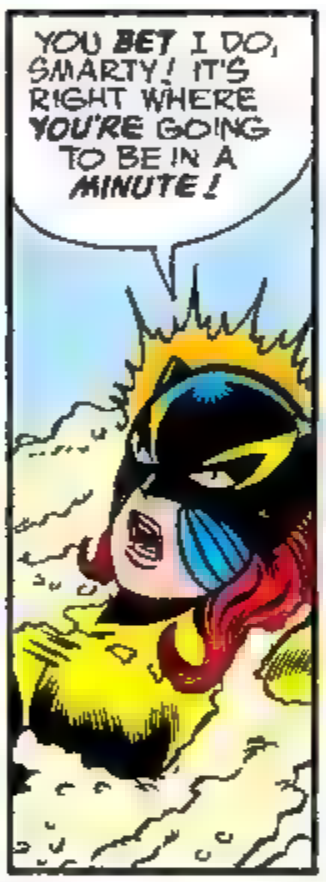

DEAD WRONG!
KBAM!

MY MODULE-- IT'S MUTILATED!
BLAST IT! THAT WAS SIX MONTH'S WORK!

YOU GIANT FOOL! ALL MY LIFE, I'VE USED MY BRAIN TO MAKE UP FOR MY HEIGHT, BUT IF YOU WANT TO FEEL MY POWER, YOU WILL!
YOU PROBABLY DON'T SEE THE ADVANTAGE I HAVE IN BEING SMALL---
YOU'RE RIGHT, GRUMPY--I DONT--
--AND BY THE WAY--

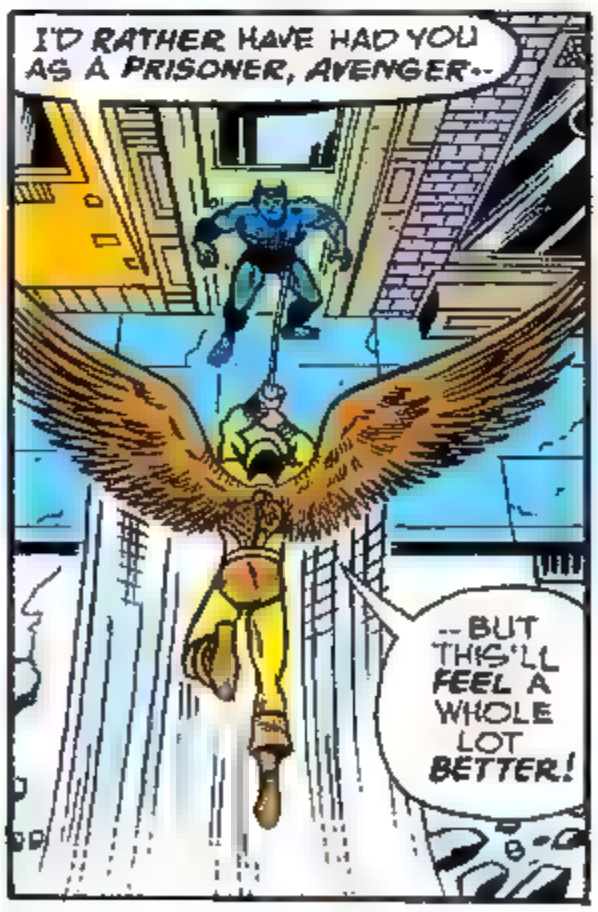

--WHO'RE YOU CALLIN' A GIANT?
BONK!

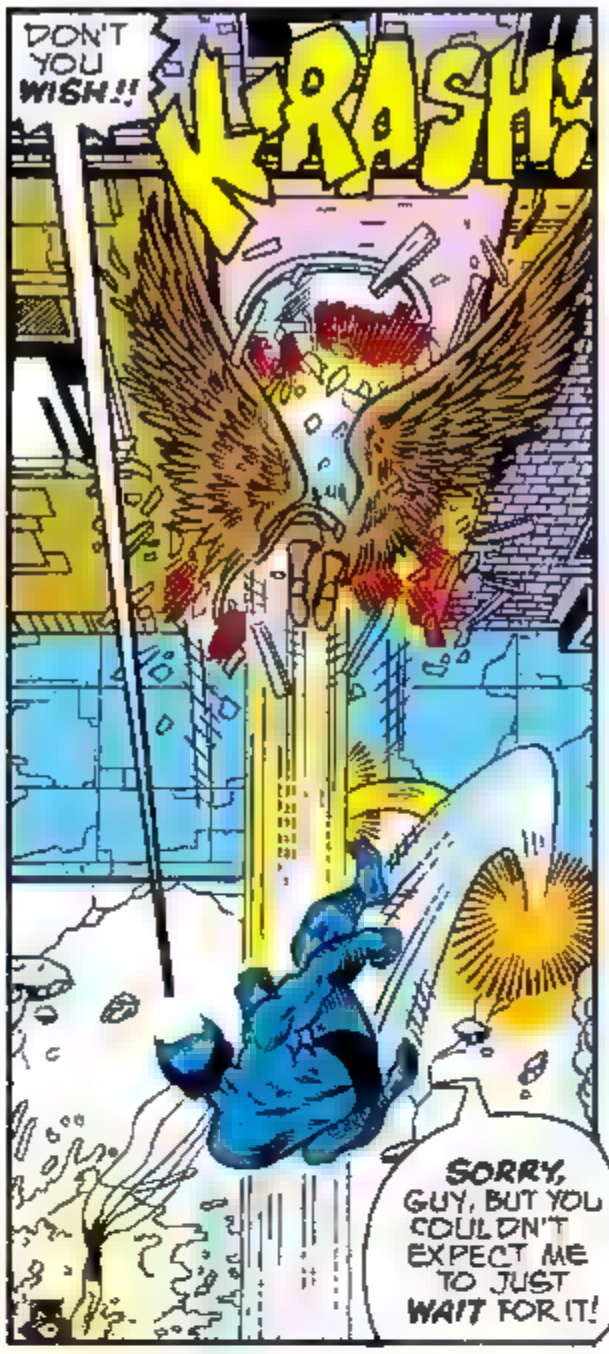

NOW THEN, PATSY-- YOU SEE WHERE YOU'D BE WITHOUT ME--!


YOU BET I DO, SMARTY! IT'S RIGHT WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO BE IN A MINUTE!

Huk--?
TOM THUMB WAS MY FRIEND, MONSTER! WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER A LONG TIME!
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, MY HEAD IS AS HARD AS MY SUPPLY OF SPECIAL WEAPONS IS INEXHAUSTABLE--

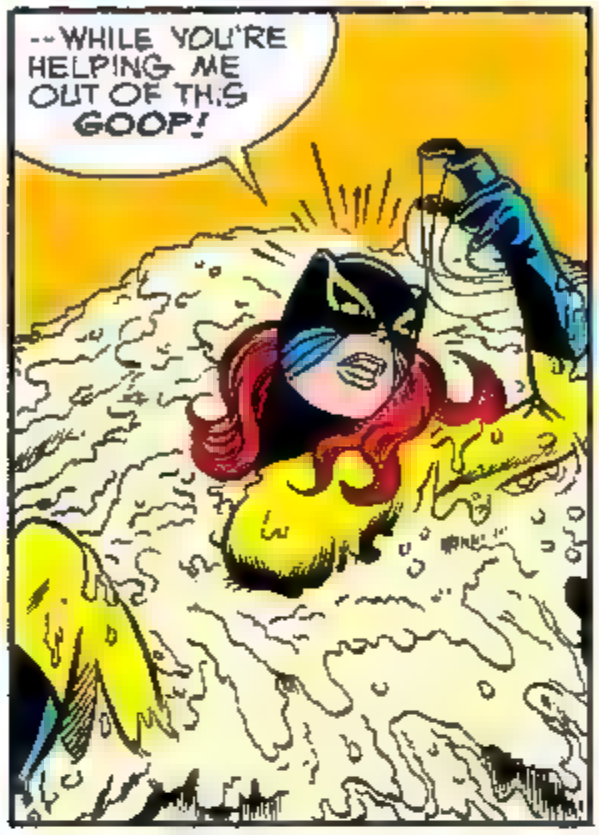
--SO NOW I'M GOING TO CARVE YOU LIKE A TURKEY!

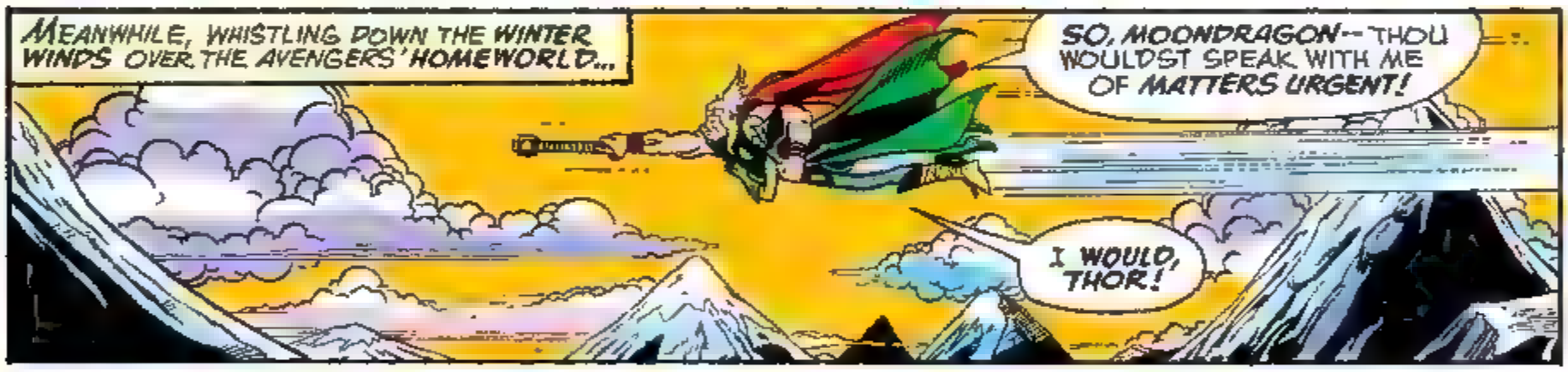

I'D RATHER HAVE HAD YOU AS A PRISONER, AVENGER--
--BUT THIS'LL FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER!

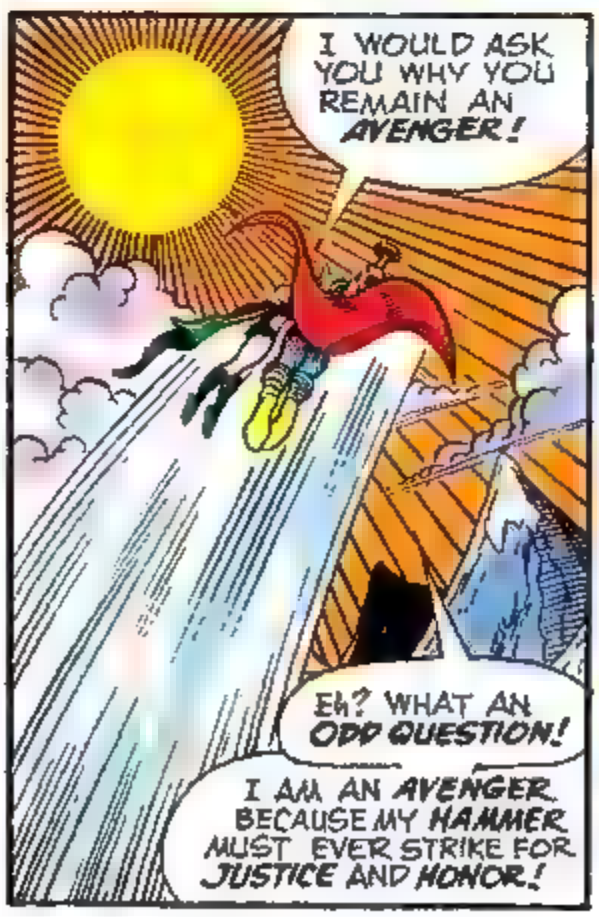

DON'T YOU WISH!!
KRASH!
SORRY, GUY, BUT YOU COULDN'T EXPECT ME TO JUST WAIT FOR IT!

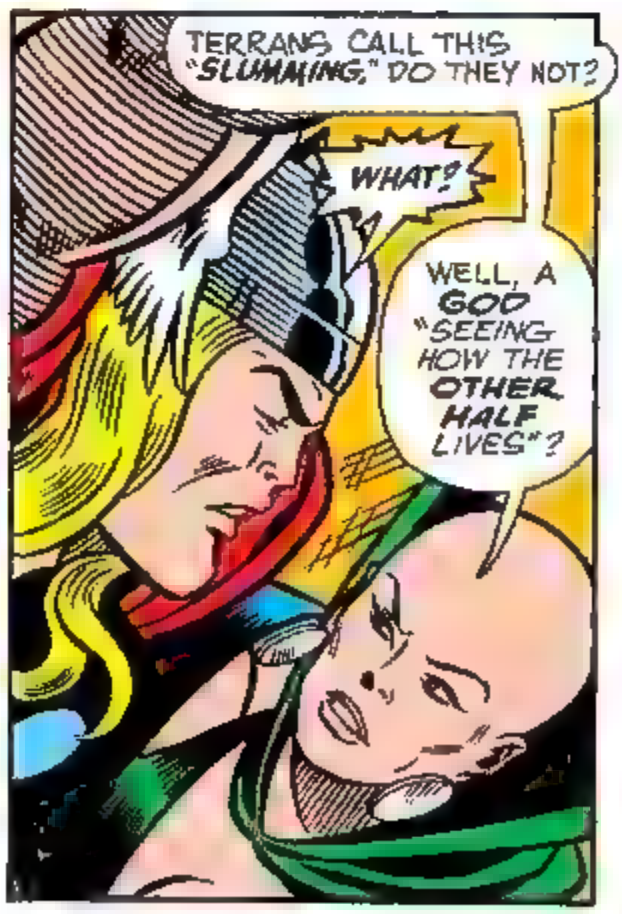
SEE, I MAY BE UGLY, AND HAIRY, AND TALL TO A MIDGET, BUT I'M ALSO FASTER THAN--
PSHAW! TALKIN' TO MY-SELF AGAIN!

THEN WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO ME, YOU BABBOON BANANA--!


--WHILE YOU'RE HELPING ME OUT OF THIS GOOP!


MEANWHILE, WHISTLING DOWN THE WINTER WINDS OVER THE AVENGERS' HOMEWORLD...
SO, MOONDRAGON-- THOU WOULDST SPEAK WITH ME OF MATTERS URGENT!
I WOULD, THOR!


I WOULD ASK YOU WHY YOU REMAIN AN AVENGER!
EH? WHAT AN ODD QUESTION!
I AM AN AVENGER BECAUSE MY HAMMER MUST EVER STRIKE FOR JUSTICE AND HONOR!


TERRANS CALL THIS "SLUMMING," DO THEY NOT?
WHAT?
WELL, A GOD "SEEING HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES"?

WHY ELSE WOULD YOU LEAVE A REALM OF IMMORTALS TO SURROUND YOURSELF WITH MEN AND WOMEN NOWHERE NEAR YOUR STRENGTH? EVEN IRON MAN---
SILENCE, WOMAN!
MORE NEXT MONTH...

...FOR, COMING UP FAST FROM **BEHIND**, IS...

THE **BATTLE** OF THE **CENTURY**, PART III

DOCTOR SPECTRUM AND THE **WHIZZER** VS. **CAPTAIN AMERICA** AND **IRON MAN**

THIS IS **SPOOKY**, **SNELL-HEAD**.

THE **CITY** ORDERED TO **STAY OUT OF OUR WAY**-- **WANDA** AND THE **VISION** GOING UP IN **SMOKE**--

--AND **STILL** NO **TRANSCEIVER-CALL** FROM THE **BEAST!**

NO SWEAT, CAP. THAT JUST MEANS THE **OLD GUARD'S** GOING TO GET THE **FIRST BREAK**, I'LL BET!

I FEEL REALLY **GOOD**, ACTUALLY-- **AVENGERING** WITH **YOU** AGAIN! WE MAKE A **GOOD TEAM!**

THERE THEY ARE, **WHIZ!**

THE TWO **BIG GUNS**-- **ALONE!** AND JUST THE TWO I WOULD HAVE **CHOSEN** FOR US!

WE'VE TEAMED UP **LOTS OF TIMES**, DOC BUT I'D SAY THIS **MIGHT** BE THE **MOST EXCITING JOB YET!**

YOU KNOW, I CAN'T REALLY FIND IT **IN** ME TO **HATE** THESE GUYS, EVEN IF THEY **DID** STEAL THE **PRESIDENT'S CROWN**--

--BUT--

--I'M--

WHOOM!

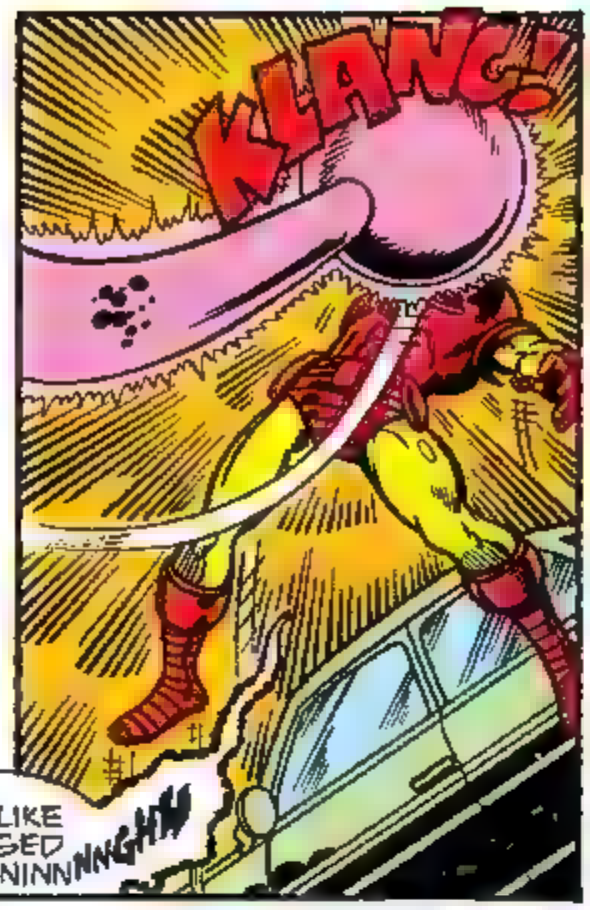
--GOING--

--TO--

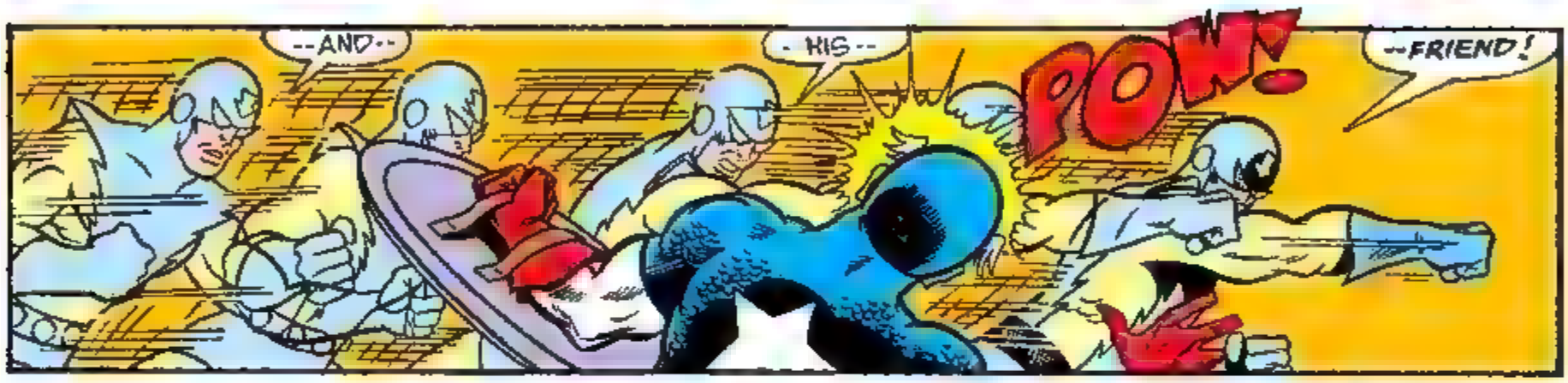
--**LOVE**--

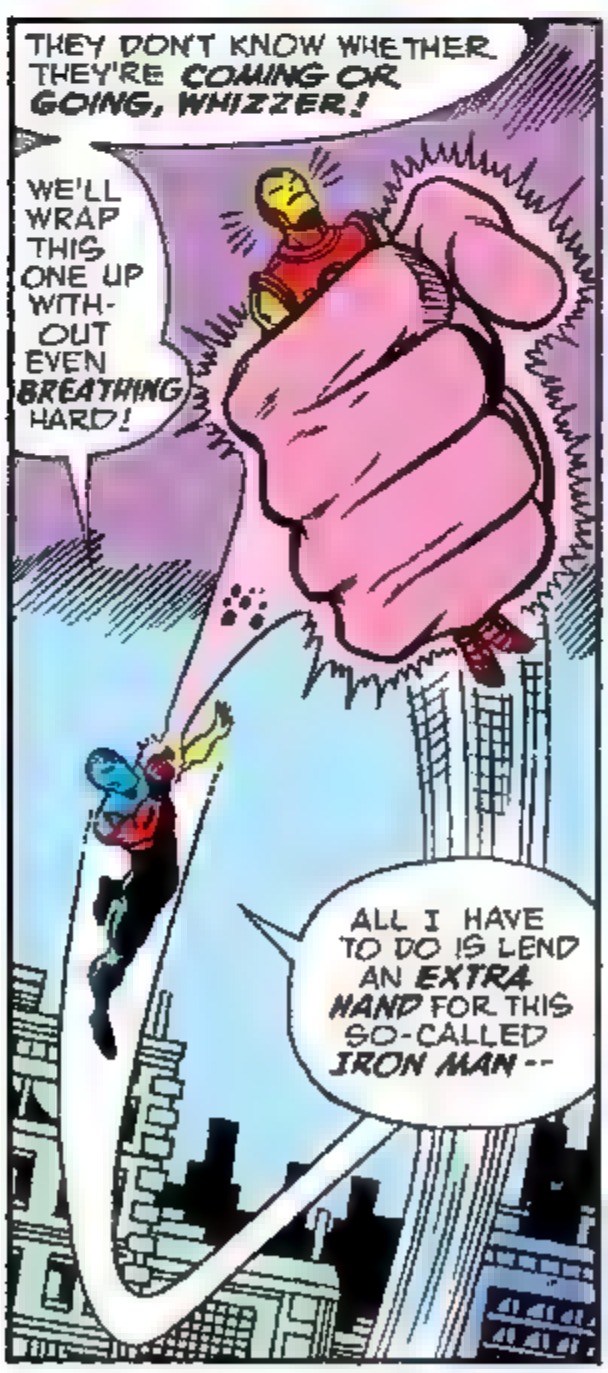
--THIS!

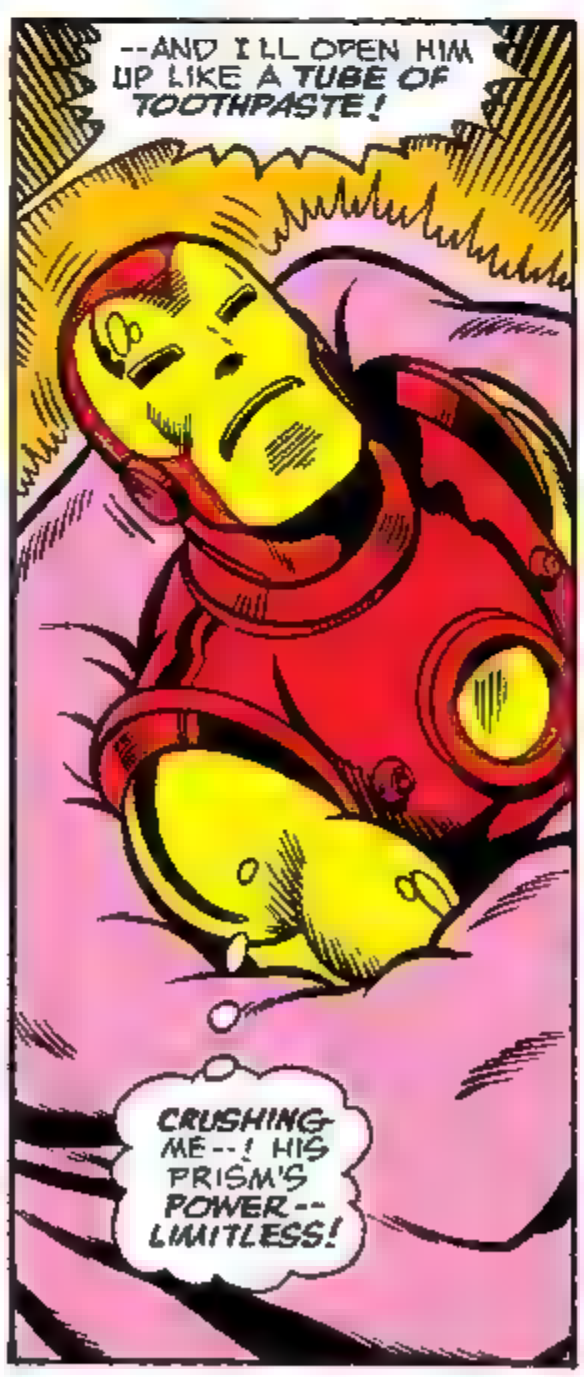
THAT WAS THE FIRST BREAK, AVENGER! HE THINKS WE'RE BILLIARD BALLS!
THIS GUY'S GOING TO BE TROUBLE, WINGHEAD!

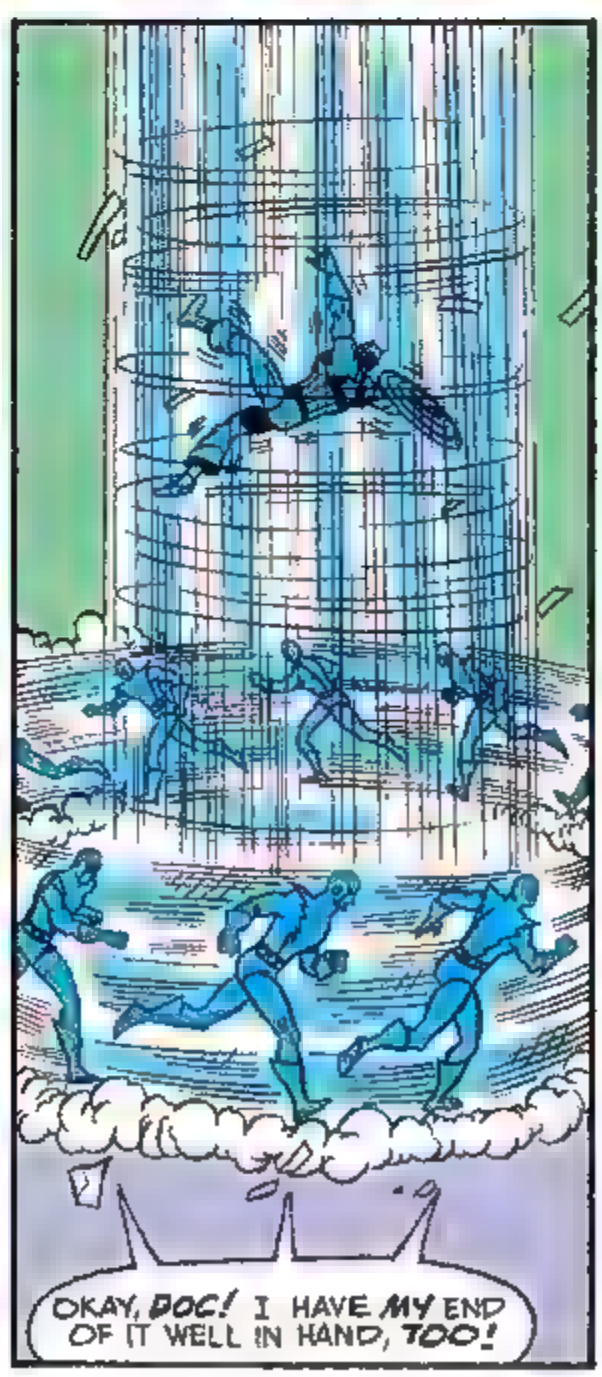

KLANG!
HE'S LIKE GREASED LIGHTNINNNGHH

HERE I AM, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
DR. SPECTRUM!
—AND HIS MAGIC POWER PRISM!

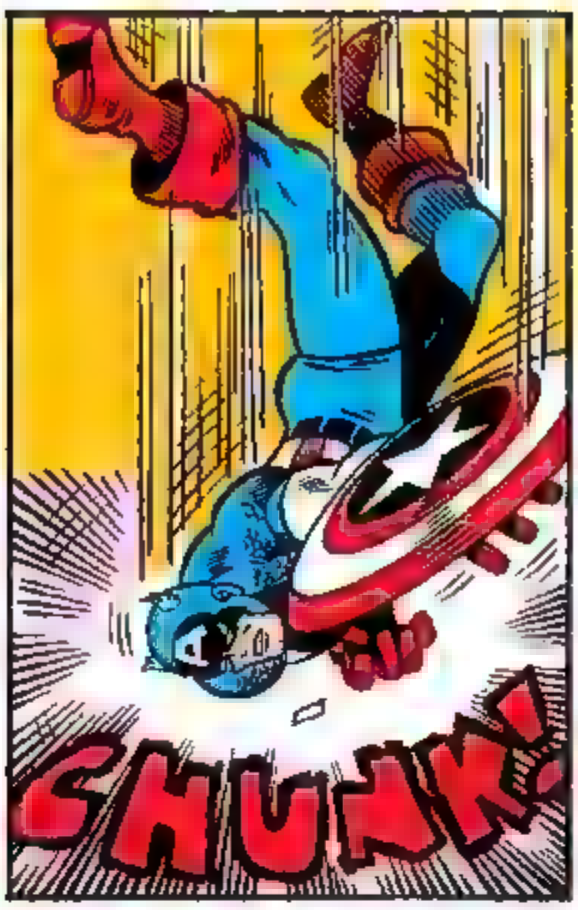

--AND--
--HIS--
POW!
--FRIEND!


THEY DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY'RE COMING OR GOING, WHIZZER!
WE'LL WRAP THIS ONE UP WITHOUT EVEN BREATHING HARD!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LEND AN EXTRA HAND FOR THIS SO-CALLED IRON MAN--


--AND I'LL OPEN HIM UP LIKE A TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE!
CRUSHING ME--! HIS PRISM'S POWER--LIMITLESS!

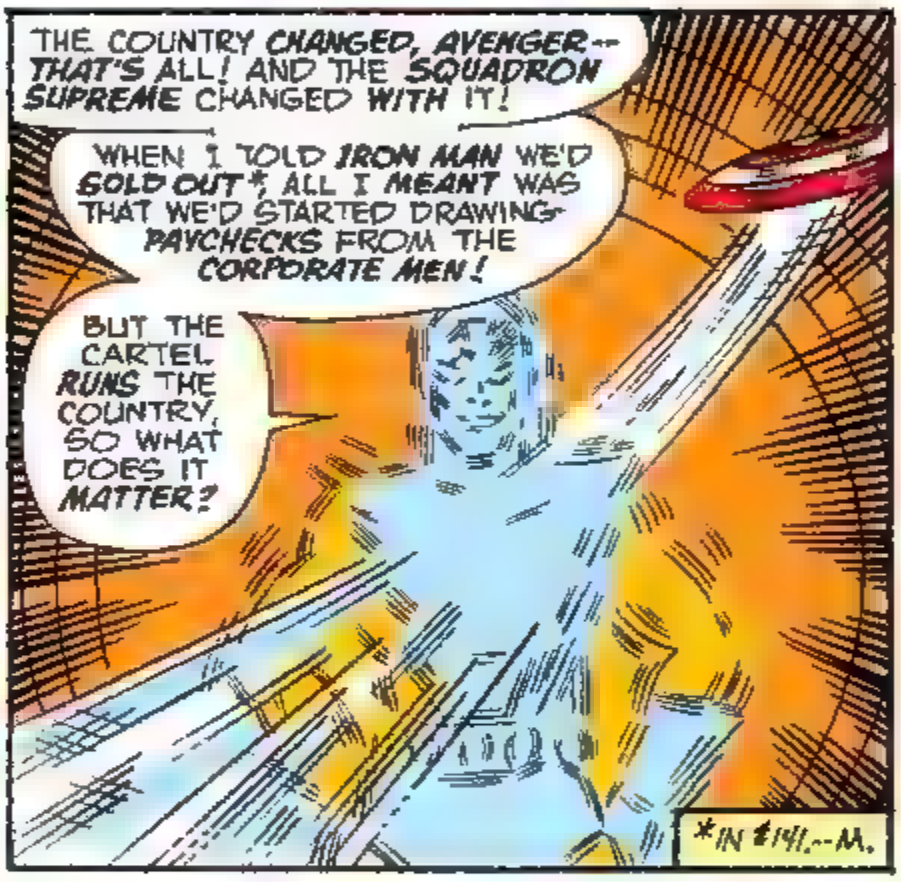

OKAY, DOC! I HAVE MY END OF IT WELL IN HAND, TOO!

I COULD KEEP THAT TORNADO BLOWING ALL DAY LONG--
--BUT THAT'S TOO EASY!


CHUNK!

THAT SINKS IT, MISTER! YOU'VE JUST MADE ME MAD!

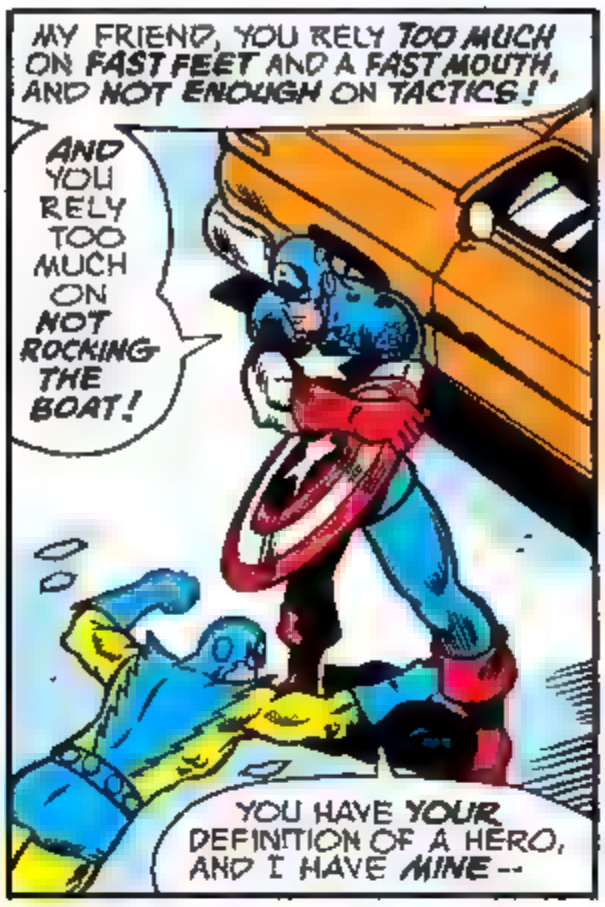
IT'S NOT ENOUGH THAT YOU SOLD OUT YOUR COUNTRY--
--BUT NO! YOU HAVE TO ENJOY IT, TOO!


THE COUNTRY CHANGED, AVENGER-- THAT'S ALL! AND THE SQUADRON SUPREME CHANGED WITH IT!
WHEN I TOLD IRON MAN WE'D SOLD OUT*, ALL I MEANT WAS THAT WE'D STARTED DRAWING PAYCHECKS FROM THE CORPORATE MEN!
BUT THE CARTEL RUNS THE COUNTRY, SO WHAT DOES IT MATTER?
*IN #141.--M.

I'M THE SAME SUPER-SPEEDSTER I ALWAYS WAS-- STILL SERVING THE GOOD OLD U.S. OF A.!
BAM!
SO DON'T GIVE ME ANY OF THAT "HOLIER THAN THOU" NONSENSE!

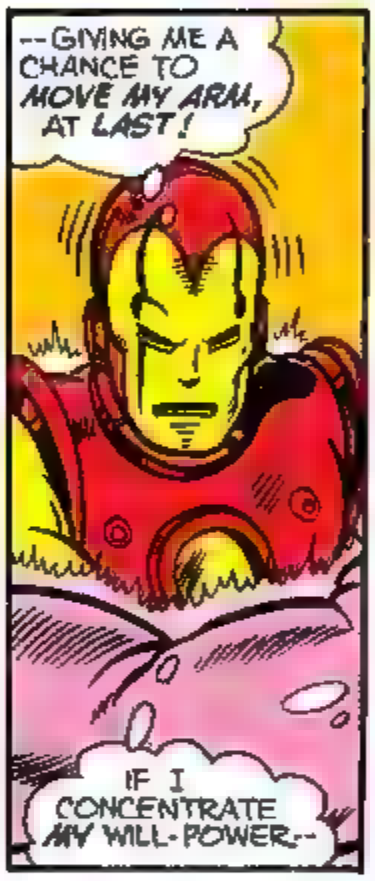
WE'RE EVERY BIT AS PATRIOTIC AS YOU ARE! NOW GET UP--
--AND LET ME FINISH YOU OFF!

WHAM!


MY FRIEND, YOU RELY TOO MUCH ON FAST FEET AND A FAST MOUTH, AND NOT ENOUGH ON TACTICS!
AND YOU RELY TOO MUCH ON NOT ROCKING THE BOAT!
YOU HAVE YOUR DEFINITION OF A HERO, AND I HAVE MINE--

--AND MINE INCLUDES BEING A LOT MORE AWARE!

WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE? IT LOOKS LIKE THE WHIZZER'S DOWN!
THANK GOD! HE LOOSENED UP ON THIS FIST WHEN HE LOOKED AWAY--


--GIVING ME A CHANCE TO MOVE MY ARM, AT LAST!
IF I CONCENTRATE MY WILL-POWER--

--MY ELECTRONIC MUSCLES CAN PULL FREE--

--AND I CAN REACH MY CHEST CONTROL!

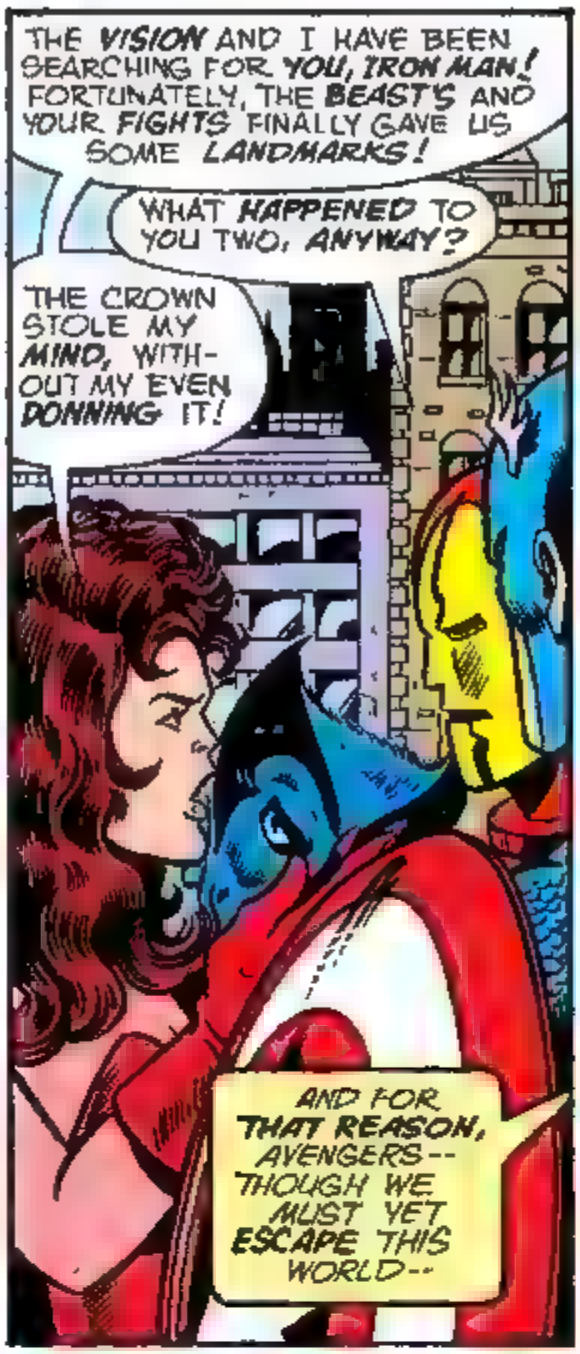
VOILÀ, DOCTOR: MY ULTRA-VIOLET BEAM--
--WHICH NULLIFIES YOUR GEM BY GOING BEYOND THE RANGE OF ITS SPECTRUM!
I'M SURE YOU RE-MEMBER IT.*
*AS WE'RE SURE YOU DO, FROM IRON MAN #64. -M

MAYBE YOU THOUGHT SURPRISE WOULD STOP ME THIS TIME--
--BUT YOU ALWAYS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE NAIVE!

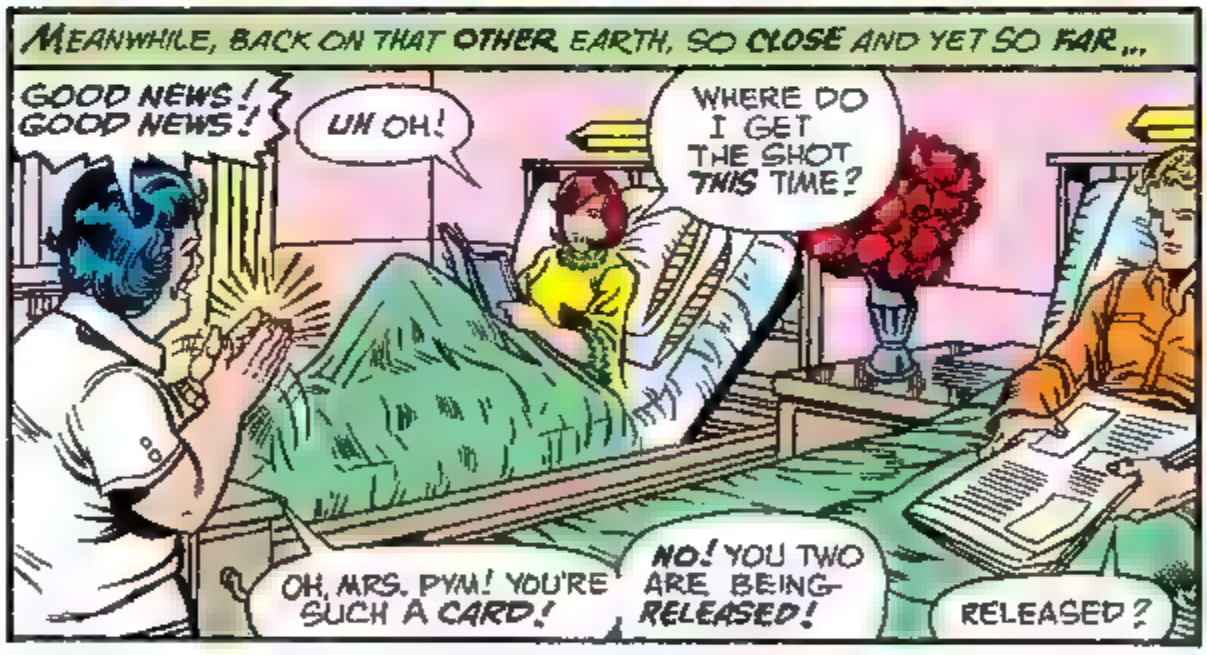
NICE WORK WITH THE SHIELD, CAP! NOW, IF ONLY THE OTHERS CAME OFF AS WELL--!
THEY DID, AVENGER! I'M SURE OF IT!

GIVE THAT MAN A FAT CIGAR, AND A BRAND-NEW COPY OF THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING!
--AND THEN THE TAX BILL!
IT'S-- HIM!

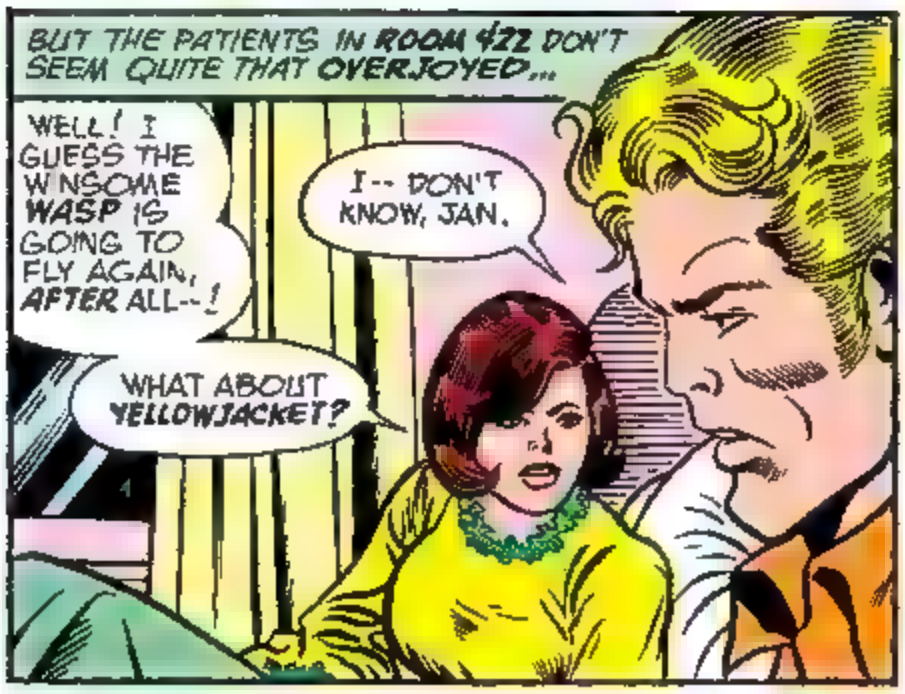
MORE THAN HIM, FELLA-- THEM! NOT TO MENTION--
--THIS WORLD'S ONLY GEN-U-INE SERPENT TOUPEE!
WE JUST RAN INTO THEM!


THE VISION AND I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOU, IRON MAN! FORTUNATELY, THE BEAST'S AND YOUR FIGHTS FINALLY GAVE US SOME LANDMARKS!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU TWO, ANYWAY?
THE CROWN STOLE MY MIND, WITHOUT MY EVEN DONNING IT!
AND FOR THAT REASON, AVENGERS-- THOUGH WE MUST YET ESCAPE THIS WORLD--

--WE DARE NOT DEPART BEFORE WE DO WHAT WE CAN TO SAVE IT!
LISTEN...

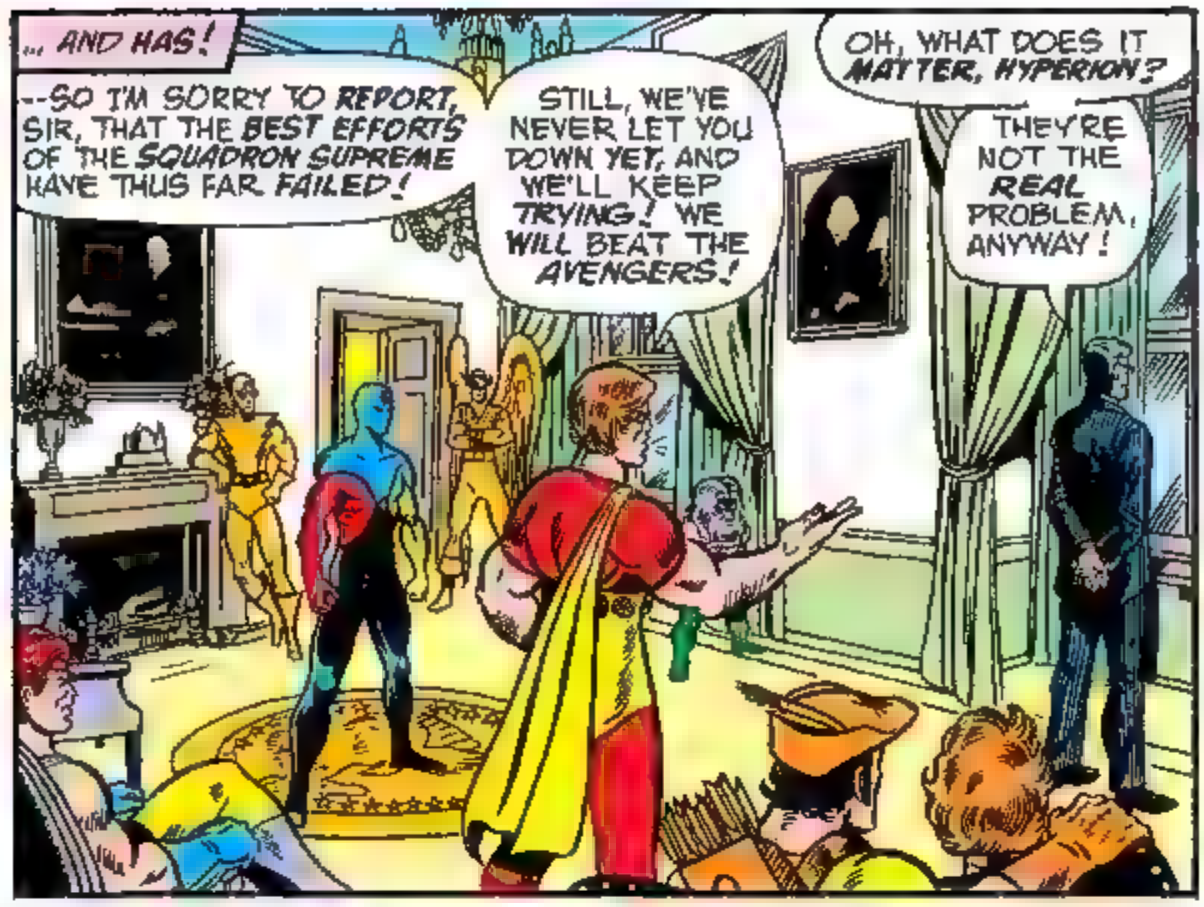

MEANWHILE, BACK ON THAT OTHER EARTH, SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR...
GOOD NEWS! GOOD NEWS!
UH OH!
WHERE DO I GET THE SHOT THIS TIME?
OH, MRS. PYM! YOU'RE SUCH A CARD!
NO! YOU TWO ARE BEING RELEASED!
RELEASED?

YES! DR. HORRIGAN SAYS YOU'RE FIT AS FIDDLES! NO PROBLEMS ANY MORE AT ALL!
GOING HOME! OOOHH!


BUT THE PATIENTS IN ROOM 422 DON'T SEEM QUITE THAT OVERJOYED...
WELL! I GUESS THE WINSOME WASP IS GOING TO FLY AGAIN, AFTER ALL--!
I-- DON'T KNOW, JAN.
WHAT ABOUT YELLOWJACKET?

WELL LISTEN, HENRY PYM! YOU'D BETTER MAKE UP YOUR MIND PRETTY SOON!
--EVEN IF I GO ALONE!
I AM GOING BACK TO THE AVENGERS--

SCENE: THE WHITE HOUSE, AT SUNDOWN...
...THE WHITE HOUSE IN CAPITOL CITY...
...WHERE EVEN A BOY FROM KNICKERBOCKER CITY CAN GROW UP TO BE PRESIDENT...


...AND HAS!
--SO I'M SORRY TO REPORT, SIR, THAT THE BEST EFFORTS OF THE SQUADRON SUPREME HAVE THUS FAR FAILED!
STILL, WE'VE NEVER LET YOU DOWN YET, AND WE'LL KEEP TRYING! WE WILL BEAT THE AVENGERS!
OH, WHAT DOES IT MATTER, HYPERION?
THEY'RE NOT THE REAL PROBLEM, ANYWAY!

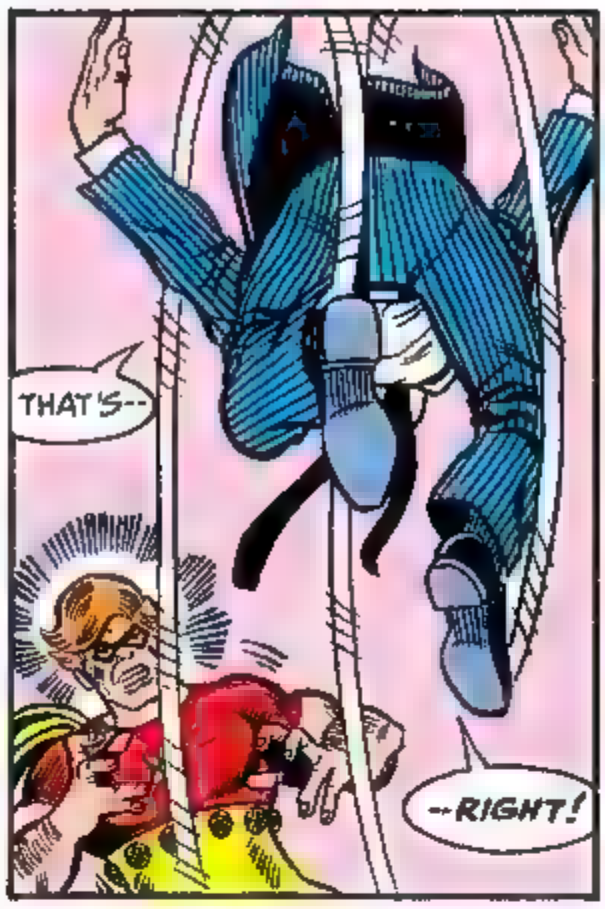
I AM-- I AND ALL THE OTHER CORPORATE AND CONGLOMERATE EXECUTIVES WHO HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF THIS COUNTRY!
WE RUN YOUR LIVES, AND YOU DON'T KNOW IT--
--SINCE SO FEW OF US EVER STEP OUT FROM BEHIND THE SCENES!

MR. PRESIDENT! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
EVEN THEN, ALL YOU SEE IS AN IMAGE-- A CAREFULLY-CRAFTED IMAGE, LIKE ANY OTHER PRODUCTS!

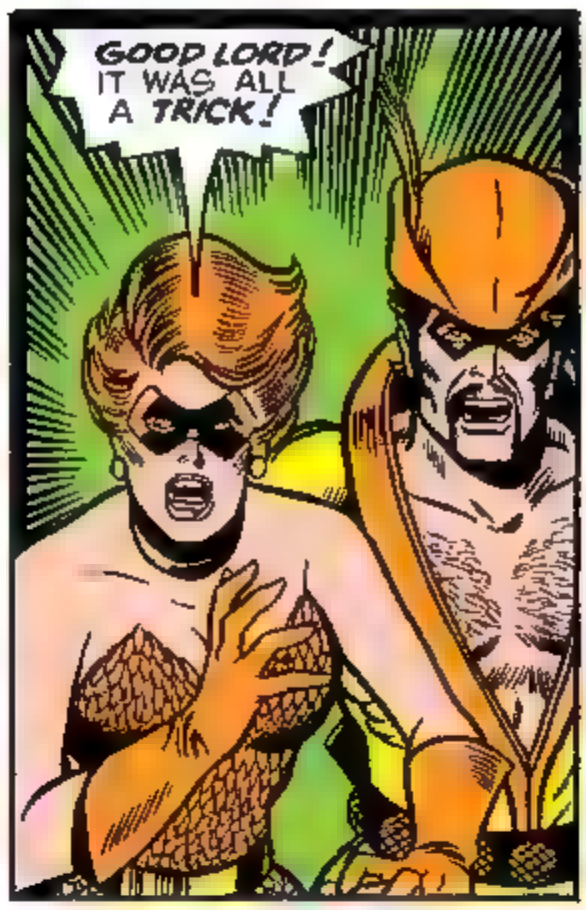
WE TALK A LOT ABOUT HONESTY, AND PRIDE, AND TEAM-SPIRIT-- BUT ALL WE REALLY WANT IS POWER!
THE TALK'S JUST TO GET YOU TO GIVE IT TO US!

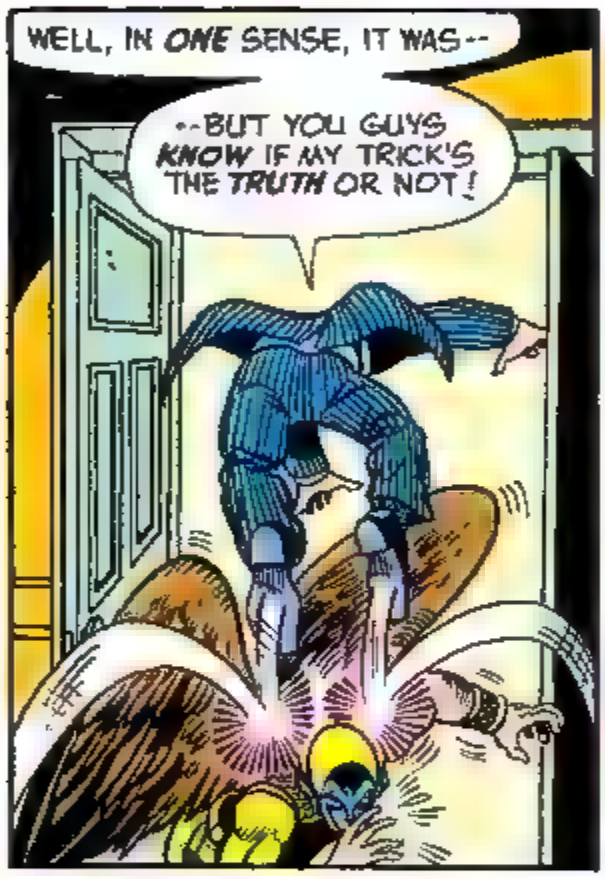
AND YOU DO! WE COMMIT THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS ACTS--TURN COMPLETELY AROUND ON ANYTHING WE'VE EVER CLAIMED TO STAND FOR--
--AND YOU GO RIGHT ALONG, PRETENDING NOT TO NOTICE!

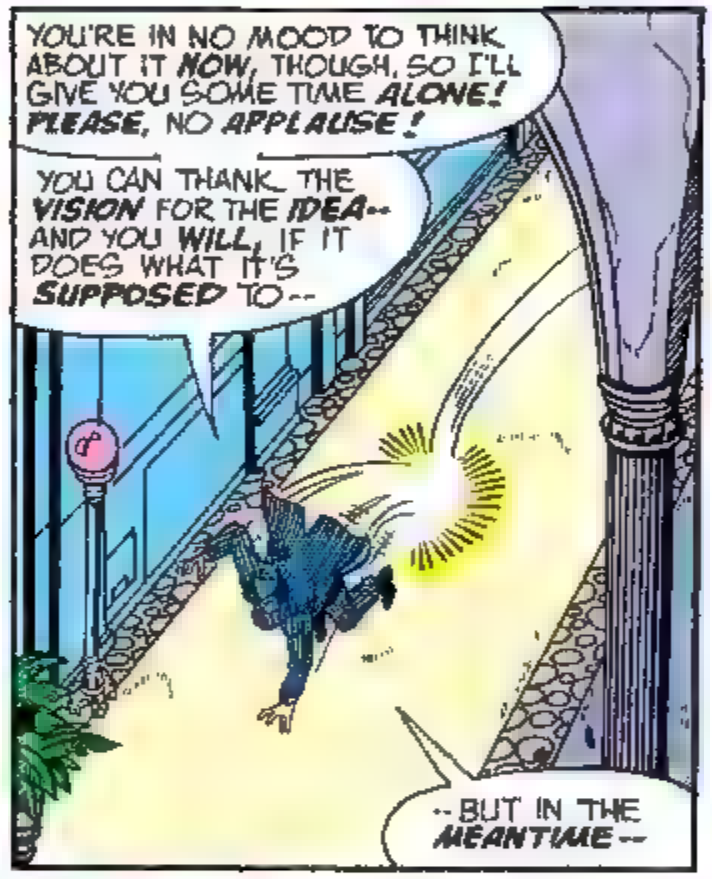
THAT'S WHAT'S SO STRANGE! FACTS DON'T AFFECT OUR IMAGE! YOU JUST LOOK AWAY, AND WONDER WHY THE DOLLAR KEEPS LOSING ITS VALUE---
NOW JUST A MINUTE! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG HERE!

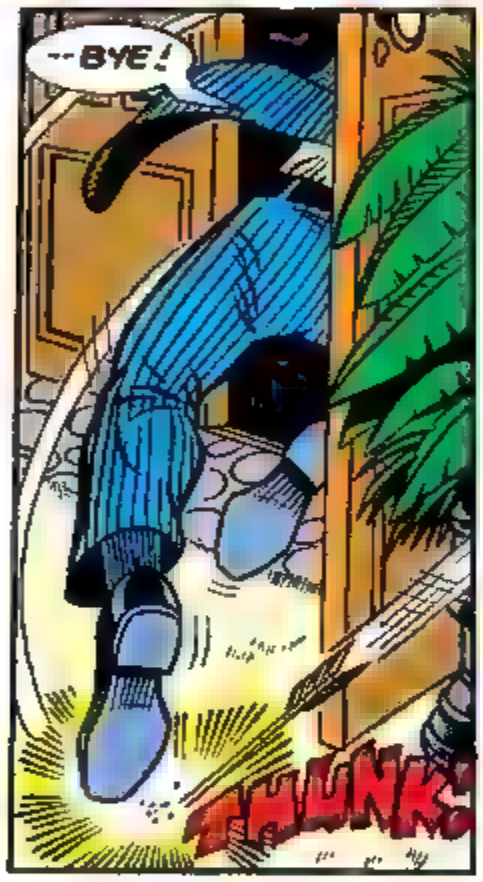

THAT'S--
--RIGHT!

BENEATH THIS MASK LURKS THE MASTER OF DISGUISES:--
--THE BLUSHING BABY BEAST!

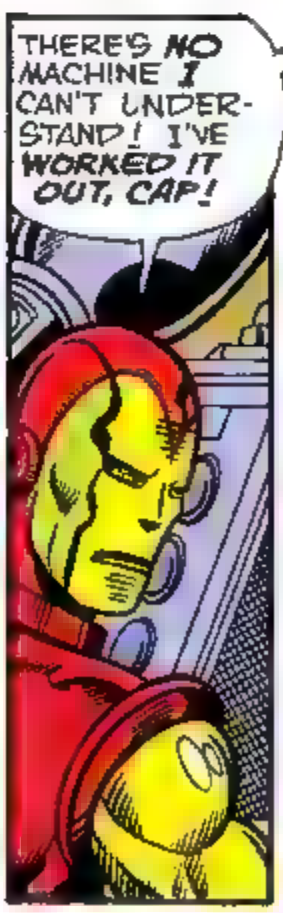

GOOD LORD! IT WAS ALL A TRICK!


WELL, IN ONE SENSE, IT WAS--
--BUT YOU GUYS KNOW IF MY TRICK'S THE TRUTH OR NOT!

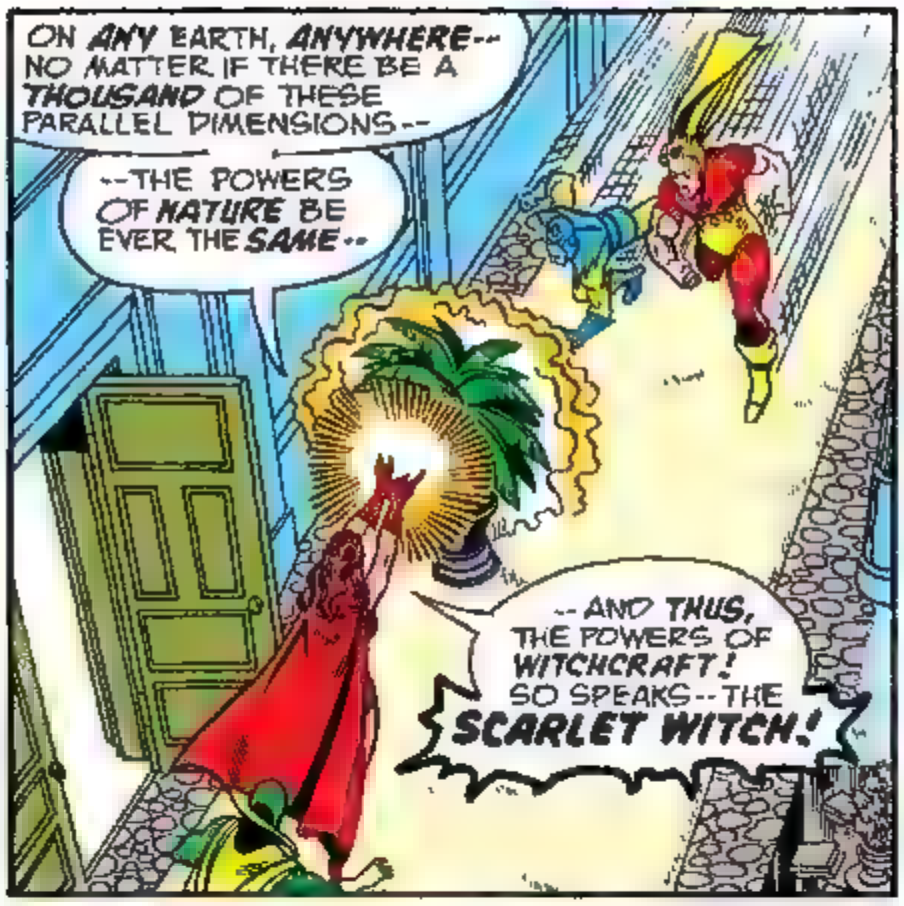

YOU'RE IN NO MOOD TO THINK ABOUT IT NOW, THOUGH, SO I'LL GIVE YOU SOME TIME ALONE! PLEASE, NO APPLAUSE!
YOU CAN THANK THE VISION FOR THE IDEA-- AND YOU WILL, IF IT DOES WHAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO--
--BUT IN THE MEANTIME--

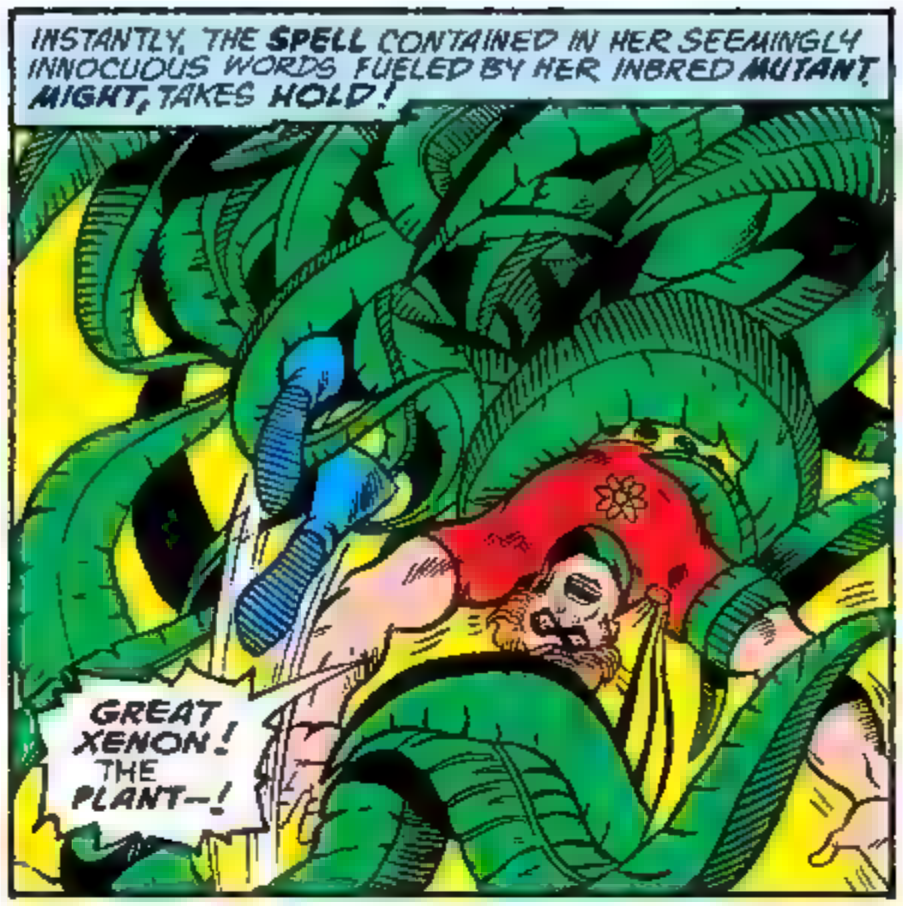

--BYE!
THUNK

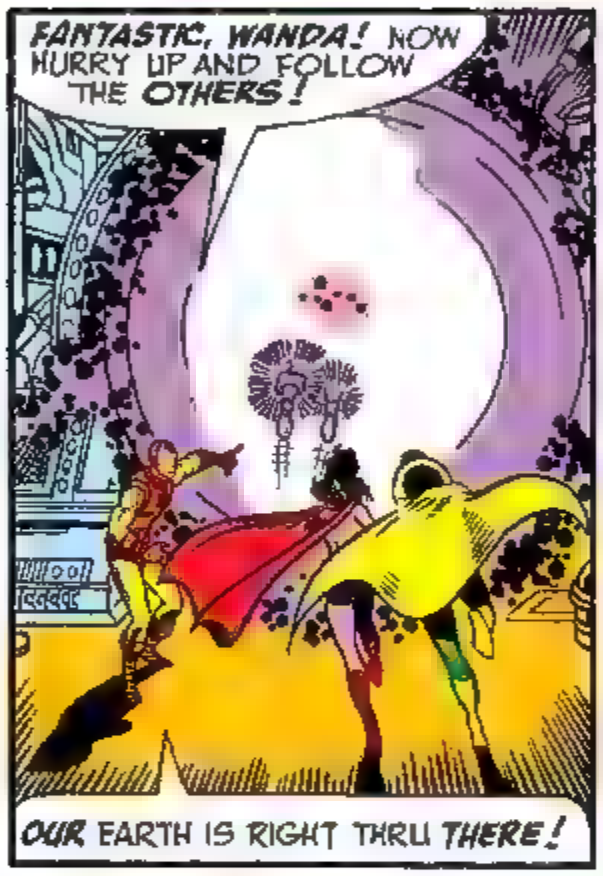
I SURE HOPE YOU GUYS ARE READY IN HERE! I'VE GOT A MOB ON MY FURRY TAIL!
MMMPH! RRRFF!
WHAT ABOUT IT, IRON MAN?

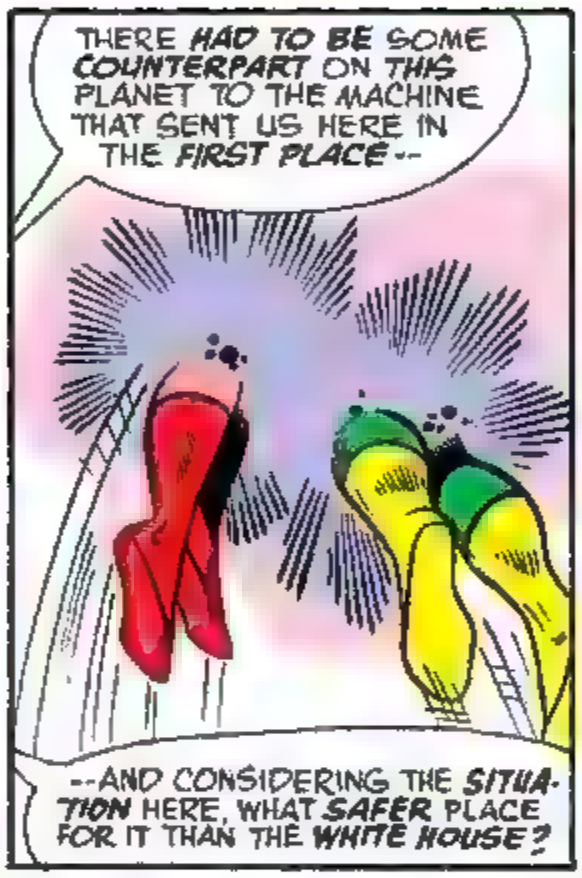

THERE'S NO MACHINE I CAN'T UNDERSTAND! I'VE WORKED IT OUT, CAP!

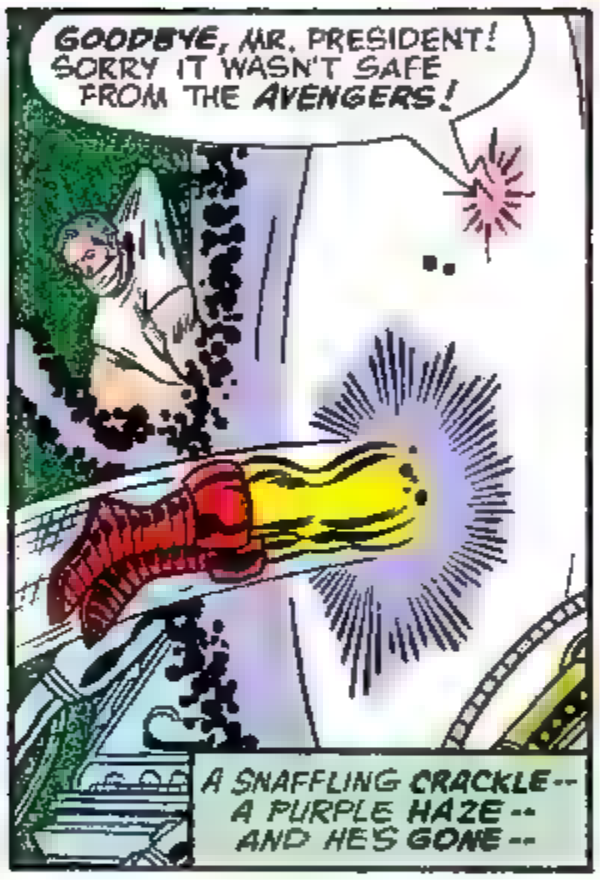
BUT WE'LL NEED SOME TIME TO MAKE USE OF IT!
THAT WILL BE MY DEPARTMENT!


ON ANY EARTH, ANYWHERE-- NO MATTER IF THERE BE A THOUSAND OF THESE PARALLEL DIMENSIONS--
--THE POWERS OF NATURE BE EVER THE SAME--
--AND THUS, THE POWERS OF WITCHCRAFT! SO SPEAKS--THE SCARLET WITCH!


INSTANTLY, THE SPELL CONTAINED IN HER SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS WORDS FUELED BY HER INBRED MUTANT MIGHT, TAKES HOLD!
GREAT XENON! THE PLANT--!


FANTASTIC, WANDA! NOW HURRY UP AND FOLLOW THE OTHERS!
OUR EARTH IS RIGHT THRU THERE!

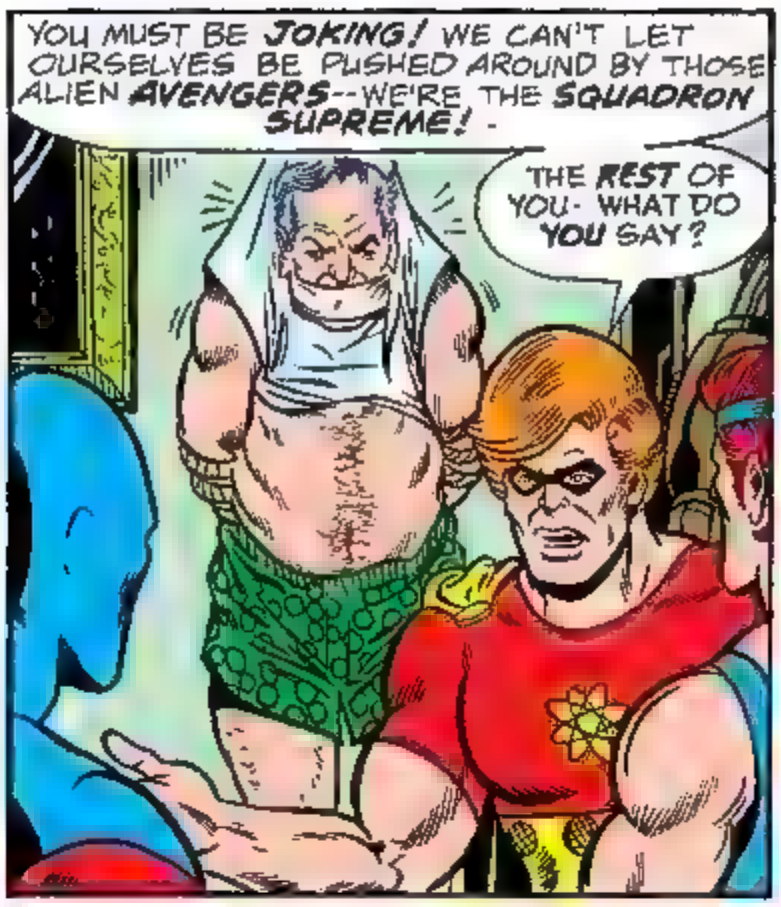

THERE HAD TO BE SOME COUNTERPART ON THIS PLANET TO THE MACHINE THAT SENT US HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE--
--AND CONSIDERING THE SITUATION HERE, WHAT SAFER PLACE FOR IT THAN THE WHITE HOUSE?

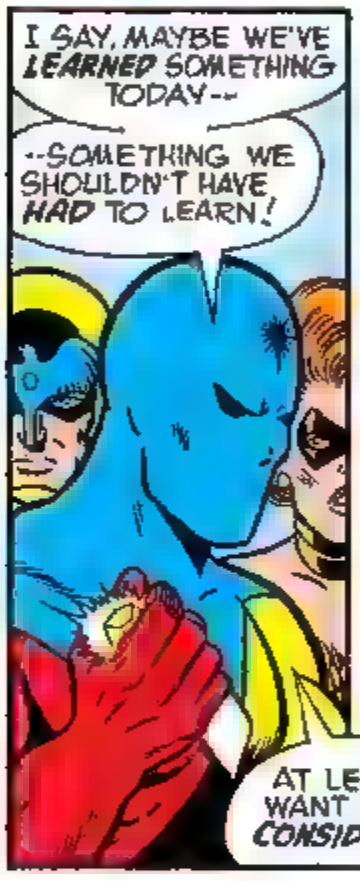

GOODBYE, MR. PRESIDENT! SORRY IT WASN'T SAFE FROM THE AVENGERS!
A SNAFFLING CRACKLE-- A PURPLE HAZE-- AND HE'S GONE--

--SCANT SECONDS BEFORE THE CAVALRY ARRIVES!
NO OVER-GROWN FERN CAN HOLD HYPERION!
THOSE RESPONSIBLE WILL NOT ESCAPE!

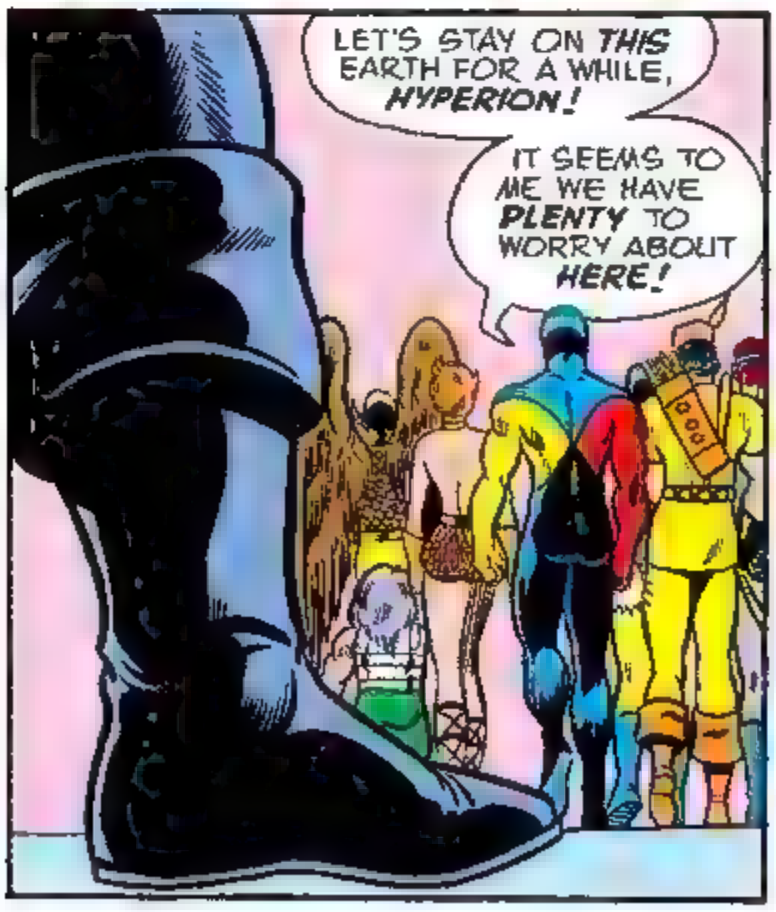
THE SQUADRON SUPREME WILL FOLLOW THEM--
NOT SO FAST, HYPE! THAT MAY NOT BE TRUE!

WHAT, GOLDEN ARCHER!
WHAT THE BEAST TOLD US, SQUAD-MEMBER-- I'VE BEEN THINKING--!


YOU MUST BE JOKING! WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BE PUSHED AROUND BY THOSE ALIEN AVENGERS--WE'RE THE SQUADRON SUPREME!
THE REST OF YOU- WHAT DO YOU SAY?


I SAY, MAYBE WE'VE LEARNED SOMETHING TODAY--
--SOMETHING WE SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO LEARN!
AT LEAST, I WANT TIME TO CONSIDER IT!

NOBODY--? NOBODY WANTS TO FOLLOW THEM?


LET'S STAY ON THIS EARTH FOR A WHILE, HYPERION!
IT SEEMS TO ME WE HAVE PLENTY TO WORRY ABOUT HERE!

AND SO, GENTLE READER, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS--
--WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE!
NEXT THE GRAND FINALE!

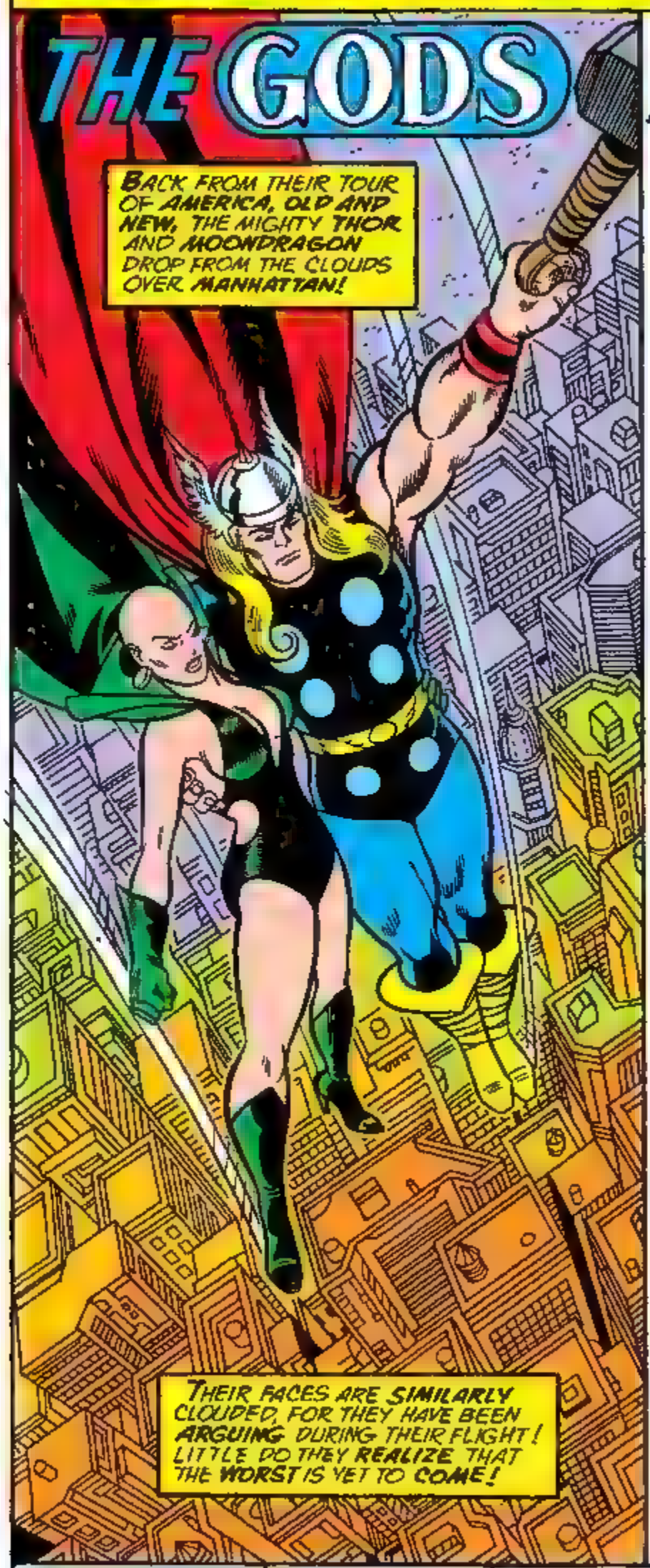
STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
149
JULY
02458
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
the AVENGERS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
YOUR MIGHTIEST BLOWS HAVE NO EFFECT ON ME, THUNDER GOD--
-- BUT CAN YOU SURVIVE THE DEATH PUNCH OF ORKA THE KILLER WHALE!

And there came a *day*, a day unlike any *other*, when *Earth's mightiest heroes and heroines* found themselves *united* against a common threat. On that day, the *Avengers* were born — to fight the foes no *single* super hero could withstand! Through the years, their roster has *prospered*, changing *many times*, but their *glory* has never been denied! Heed the *call*, then — for now, the *Avengers Assemble!*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS! TM

JV 370

THE GODS AND THE GANG!



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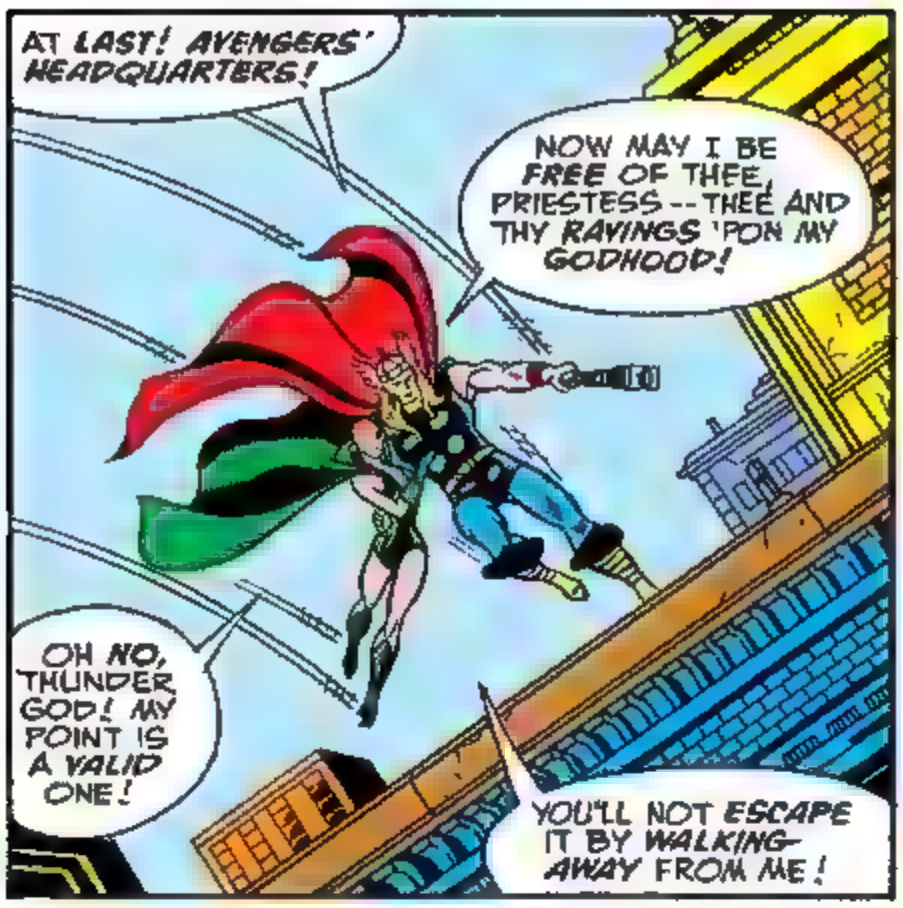
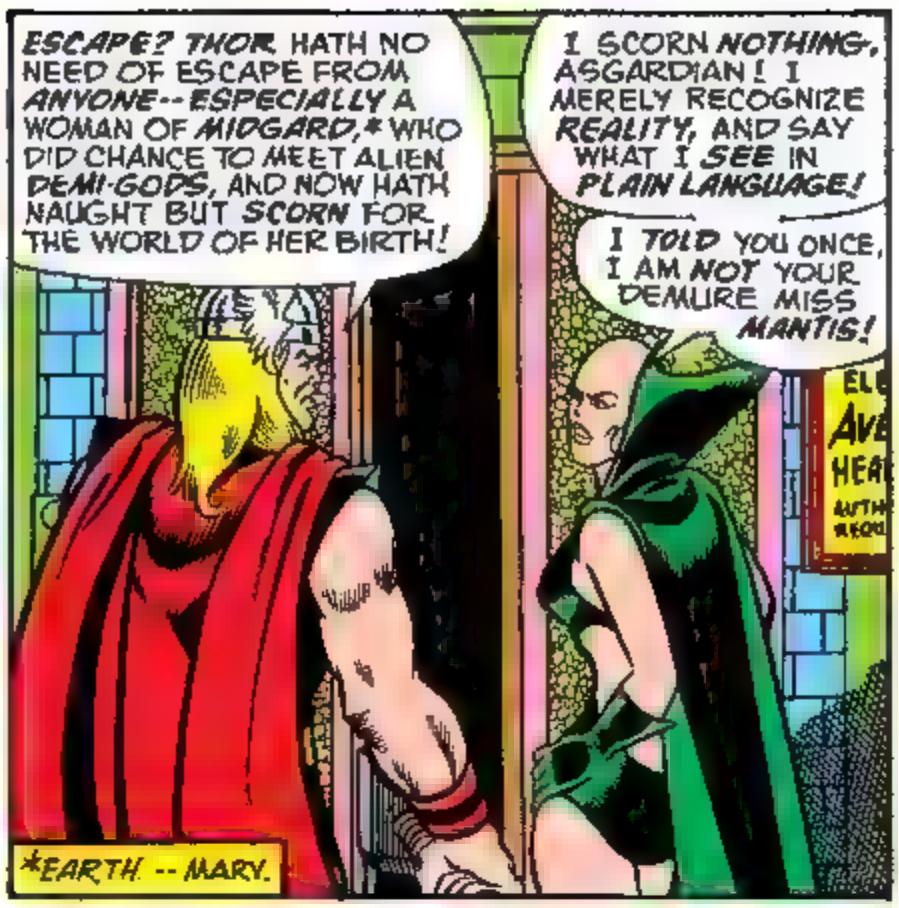
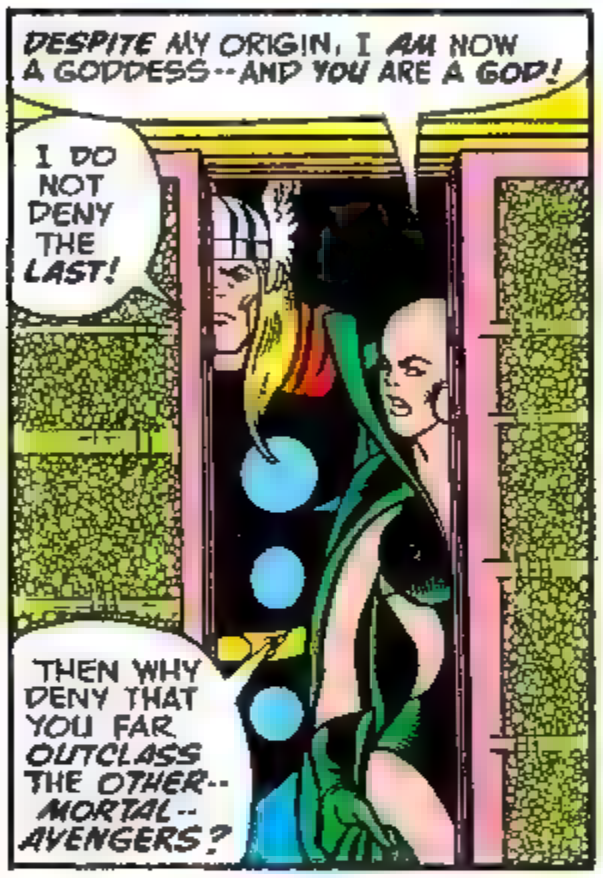

AT LAST! AVENGERS' HEADQUARTERS!
NOW MAY I BE FREE OF THEE, PRIESTESS -- THEE AND THY RAVINGS 'PON MY GODHOOD!
OH NO, THUNDER GOD! MY POINT IS A VALID ONE!
YOU'LL NOT ESCAPE IT BY WALKING AWAY FROM ME!

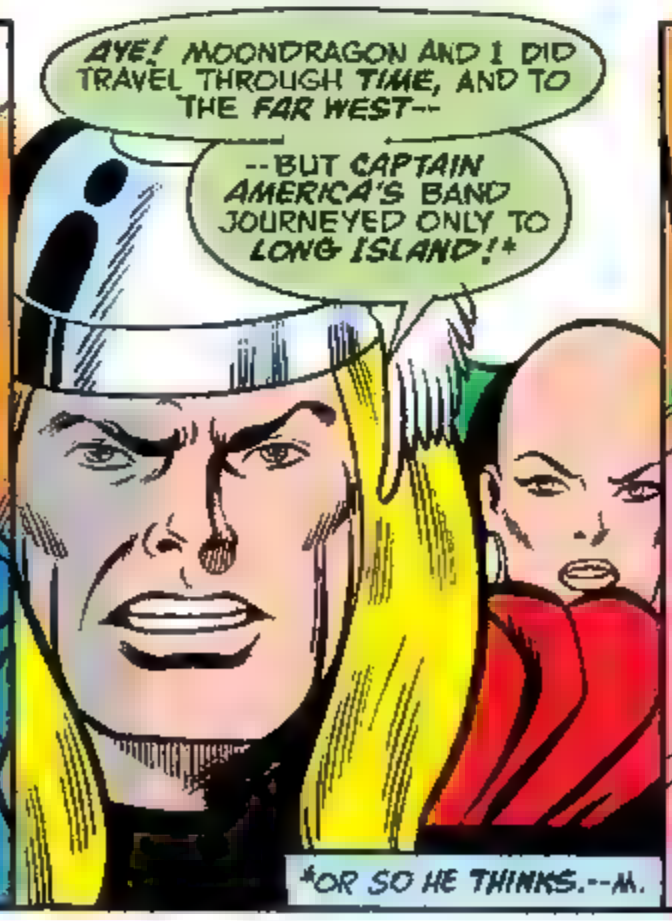

ESCAPE? THOR HATH NO NEED OF ESCAPE FROM ANYONE -- ESPECIALLY A WOMAN OF MIDGARD,* WHO DID CHANCE TO MEET ALIEN DEMI-GODS, AND NOW HATH NAUGHT BUT SCORN FOR THE WORLD OF HER BIRTH!
I SCORN NOTHING, ASGARDIAN! I MERELY RECOGNIZE REALITY, AND SAY WHAT I SEE IN PLAIN LANGUAGE!
I TOLD YOU ONCE, I AM NOT YOUR DEMURE MISS MANTIS!
*EARTH -- MARY.

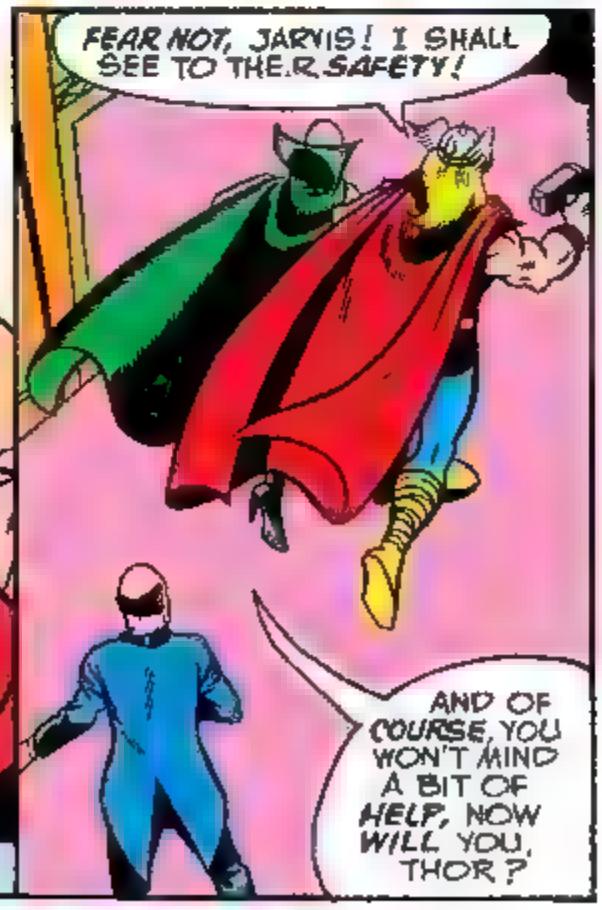

DESPITE MY ORIGIN, I AM NOW A GODDESS -- AND YOU ARE A GOD!
I DO NOT DENY THE LAST!
THEN WHY DENY THAT YOU FAR OUTCLASS THE OTHER -- MORTAL -- AVENGERS?

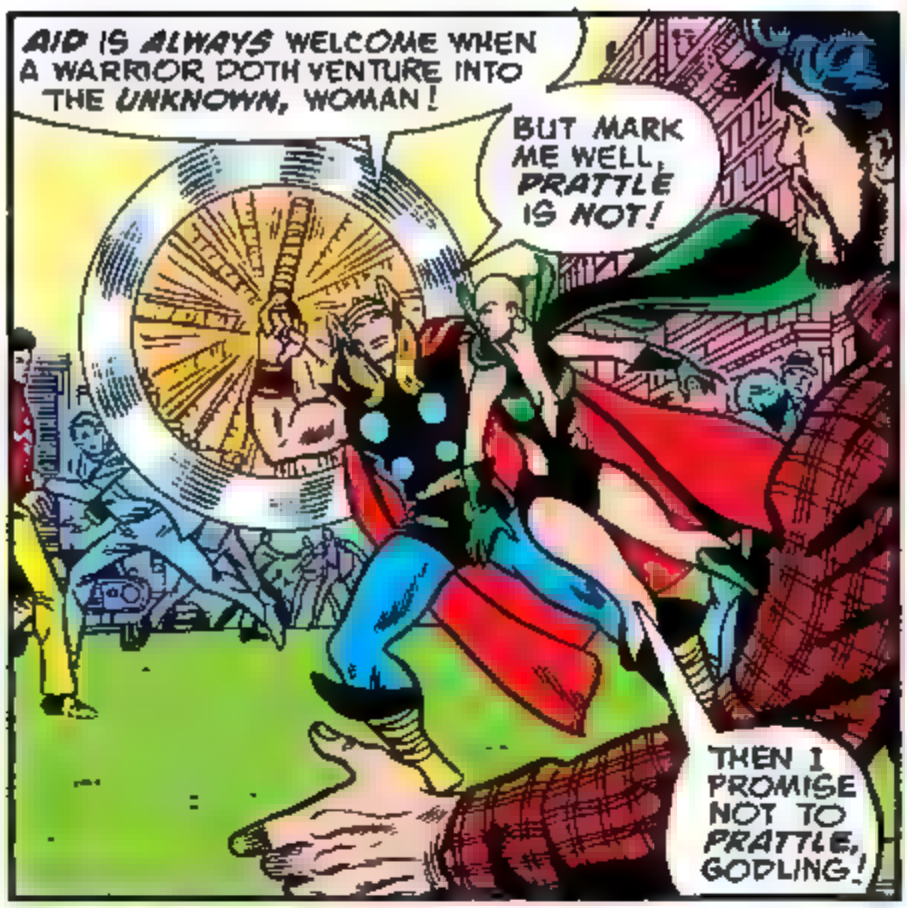
I SAID BEFORE, AND I SAY AGAIN --
-- YOUR BEING AN AVENGER IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SLUMMING!

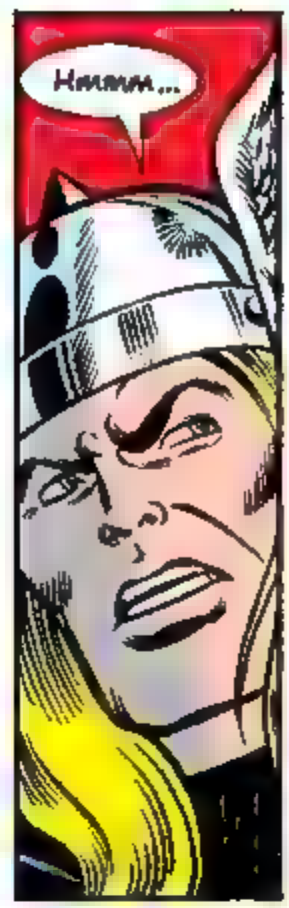
FIE! I DID PARTICIPATE IN THE FORMATION OF THIS BAND, MOONDRAGON! 'TIS NONSENSE THOU DOST ...
OH! MASTER THOR! THANK HEAVENS YOU'RE BACK, SIR!
WHAT IS IT, JARVIS?

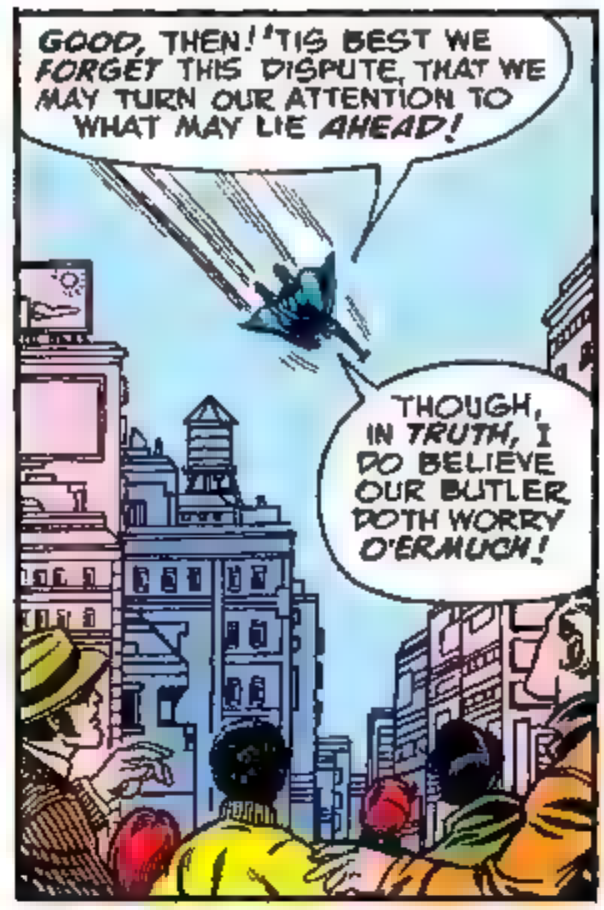
THE OTHERS, SIR! I HAD BEGUN TO FEAR FOR BOTH YOU AND THEM, YOU'D ALL BEEN GONE SO LONG!
NOW I FEAR ONLY FOR THEM!


AYE! MOONDRAGON AND I DID TRAVEL THROUGH TIME, AND TO THE FAR WEST --
-- BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA'S BAND JOURNEYED ONLY TO LONG ISLAND!*
*OR SO HE THINKS. -- M.


FEAR NOT, JARVIS! I SHALL SEE TO THEIR SAFETY!
AND OF COURSE, YOU WON'T MIND A BIT OF HELP, NOW WILL YOU, THOR?







WRONG!

BLOK!

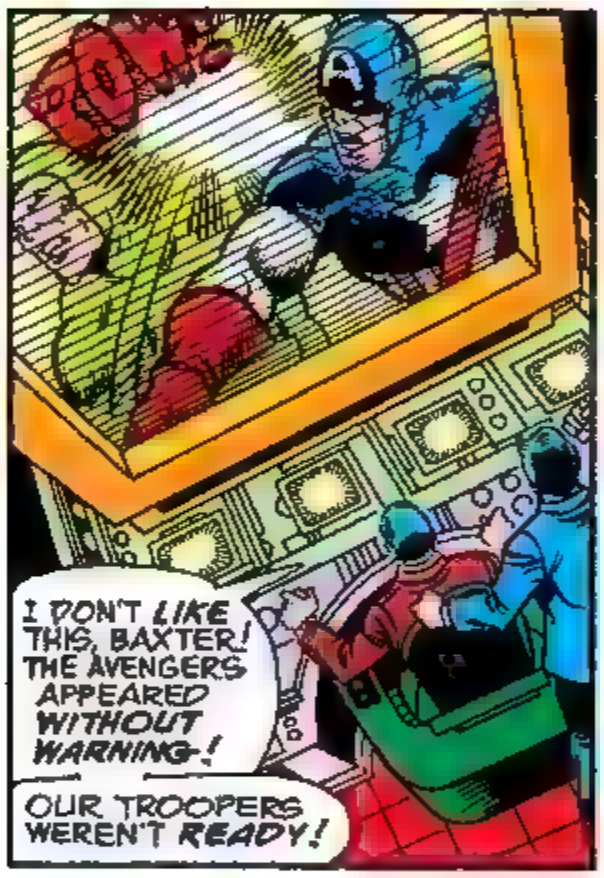
TANG!

BOK!

FOOM!

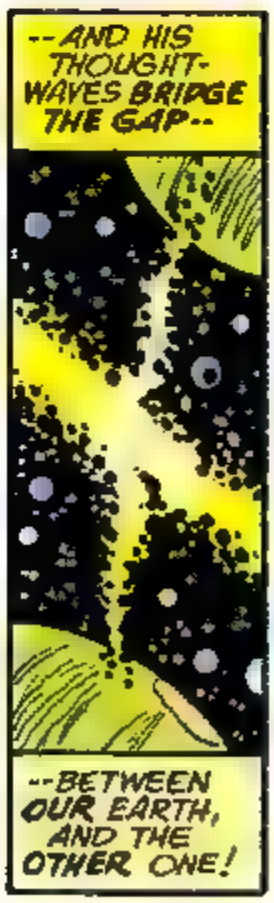
THIS MUST BE THE ROXXON OIL ARMY WE CAME HERE TO FIND IN THE FIRST PLACE, HUH, WANDA?
NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY! NEVER HIT A LADY FROM BEHIND!
OH BOY! THAT WAS JUST LIKE SPIDER-MAN!
THANKS, HELLCAT!

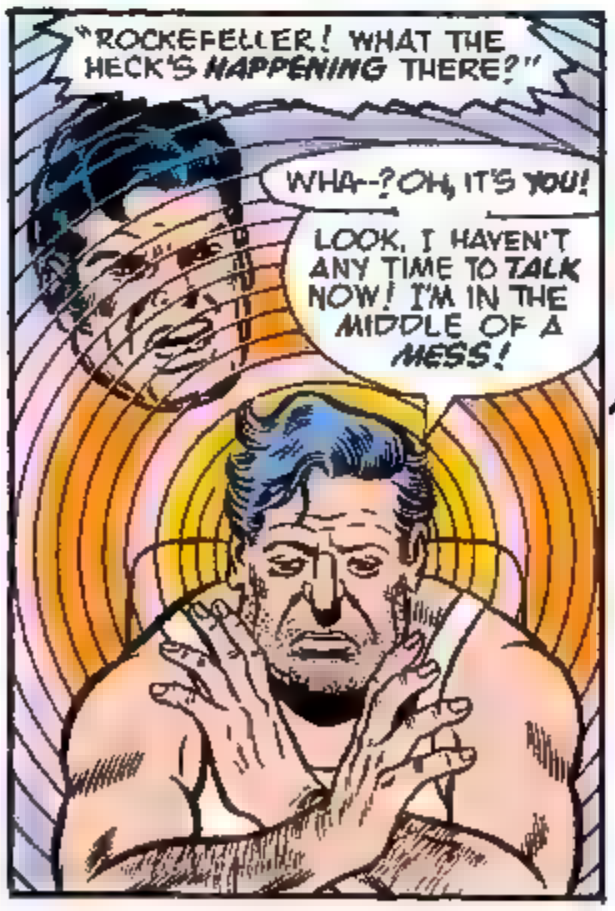
WHOA!
WHOA!
WHOA!
THESE AVENGERS ARE MURDER! GIVE 'EM ALL YOU'VE---
OWW!
KRAK!

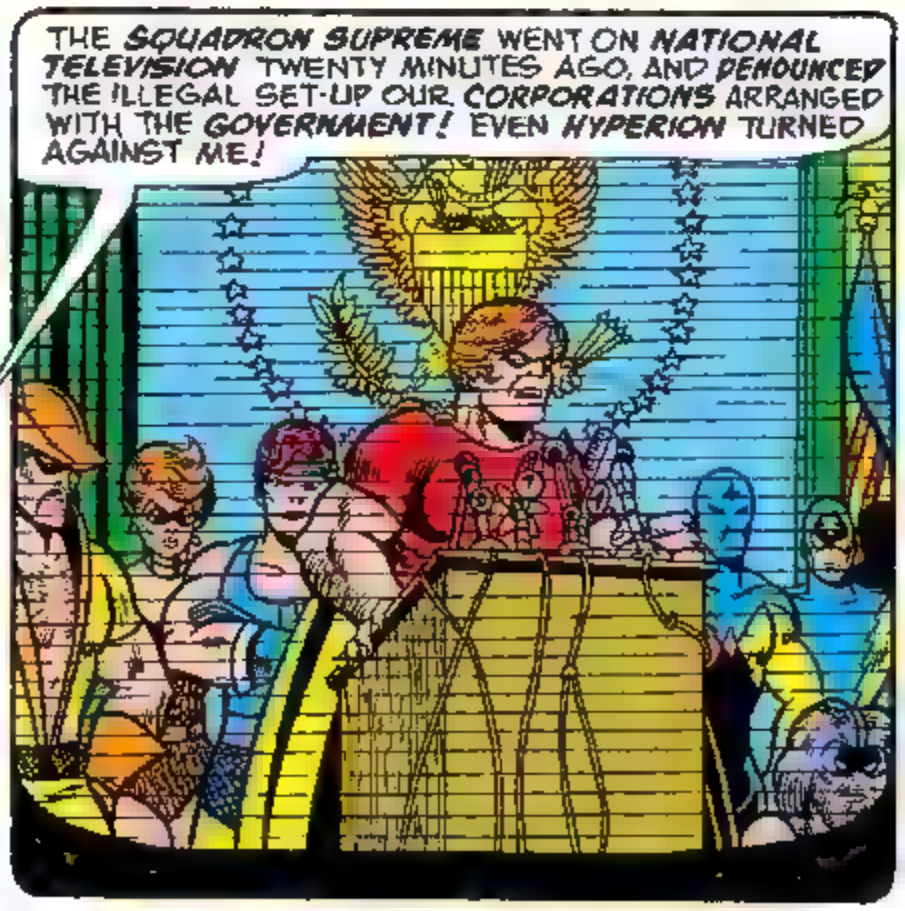

I DON'T LIKE THIS, BAXTER! THE AVENGERS APPEARED WITHOUT WARNING!
OUR TROOPERS WEREN'T READY!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SQUADRON SUPREME? THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF THESE GUYS ON THEIR WORLD!
I DON'T KNOW-- BUT I WANT OUR SECRET WEAPON, JUST IN CASE!

HOWEVER, WHEN HUGH JONES STEPS OUTSIDE HIS OFFICE--
--HE TAKES A DIFFERENT TACK-- ONE UNKNOWN TO CAPTAIN BAXTER! HE CONCENTRATES--


--AND HIS THOUGHT-WAVES BRIDGE THE GAP--
--BETWEEN OUR EARTH, AND THE OTHER ONE!

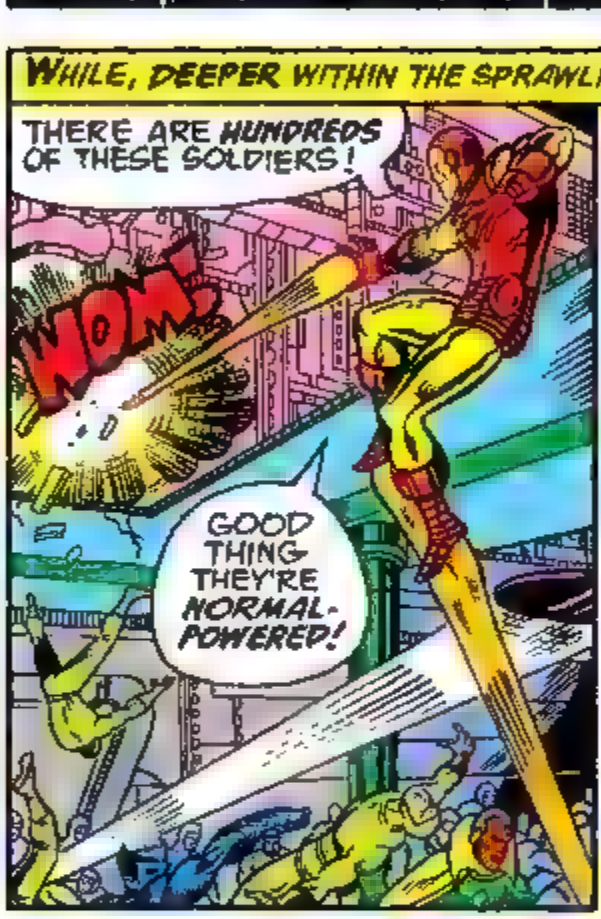

"ROCKEFELLER! WHAT THE HECK'S HAPPENING THERE?"
WHA--? OH, IT'S YOU!
LOOK, I HAVEN'T ANY TIME TO TALK NOW! I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A MESS!


THE SQUADRON SUPREME WENT ON NATIONAL TELEVISION TWENTY MINUTES AGO, AND DENOUNCED THE ILLEGAL SET-UP OUR CORPORATIONS ARRANGED WITH THE GOVERNMENT! EVEN HYPERION TURNED AGAINST ME!

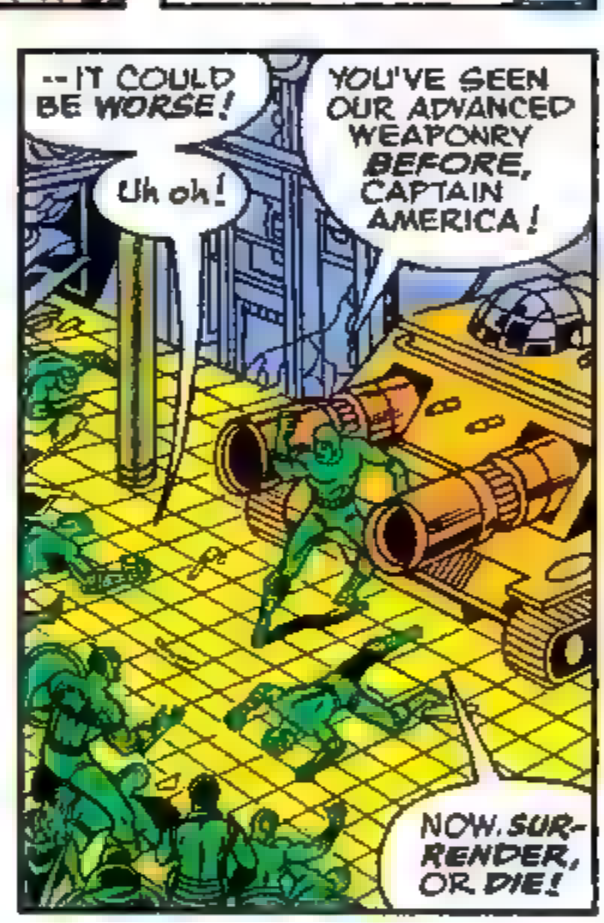
THERE'S CHAOS IN THE STREETS! THE ONLY THING I KNOW FOR CERTAIN RIGHT NOW IS--
-- I'LL NEVER DO YOU ANY MORE FAVORS!
I'M SORRY, FELLOW APOSTLE OF THE SERPENT LORD! I HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING!
GOOD LUCK!

SO! THE AVENGERS ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN I'D THOUGHT! AND THEY MUST BE HALTED HERE, OR THEY'LL BRING DOWN MY EMPIRE!

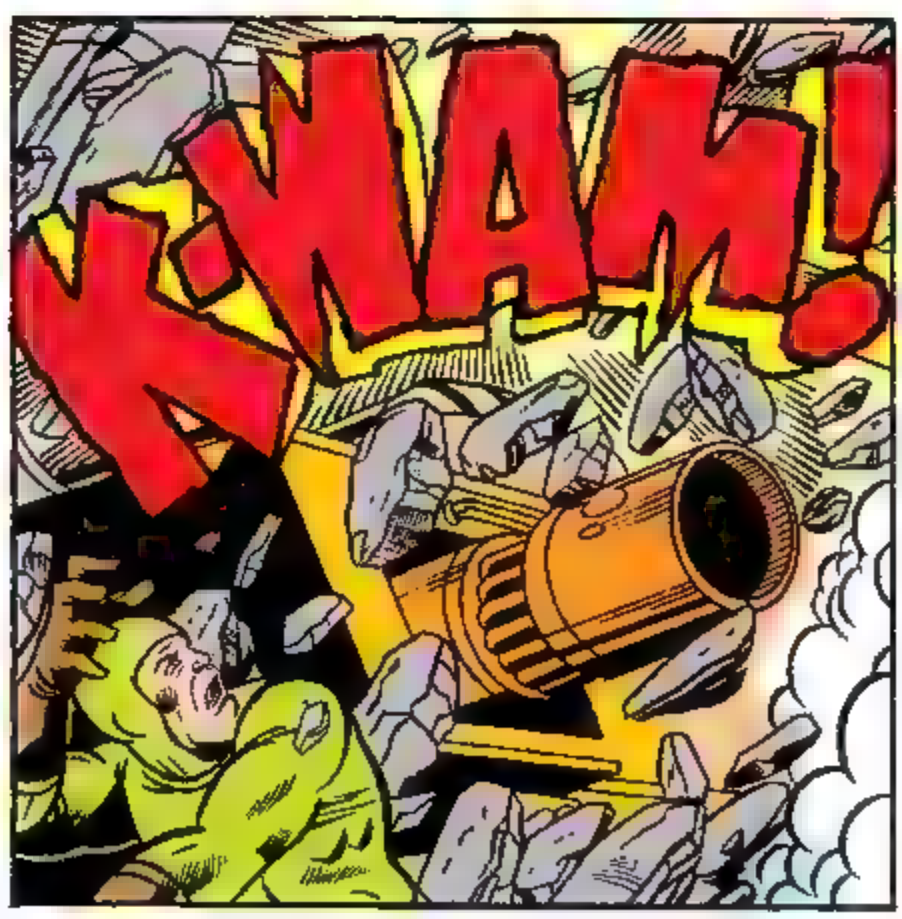
THERE IS NO MORE TIME FOR DELAY! I NEED THE FINAL WEAPON WHICH THE SERPENT CROWN PROVIDED...
...THOUGH I HAD PRAYED IT WOULD NEVER BE LOOSED!


WHILE, DEEPER WITHIN THE SPRAWLING PLANT...
THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THESE SOLDIERS!
WOM!
GOOD THING THEY'RE NORMAL-POWERED!

BIFF!
TWENTY-TO-ONE ODDS, AND HE'S HAPPY!
WELL, AFTER ALL, BEAST--

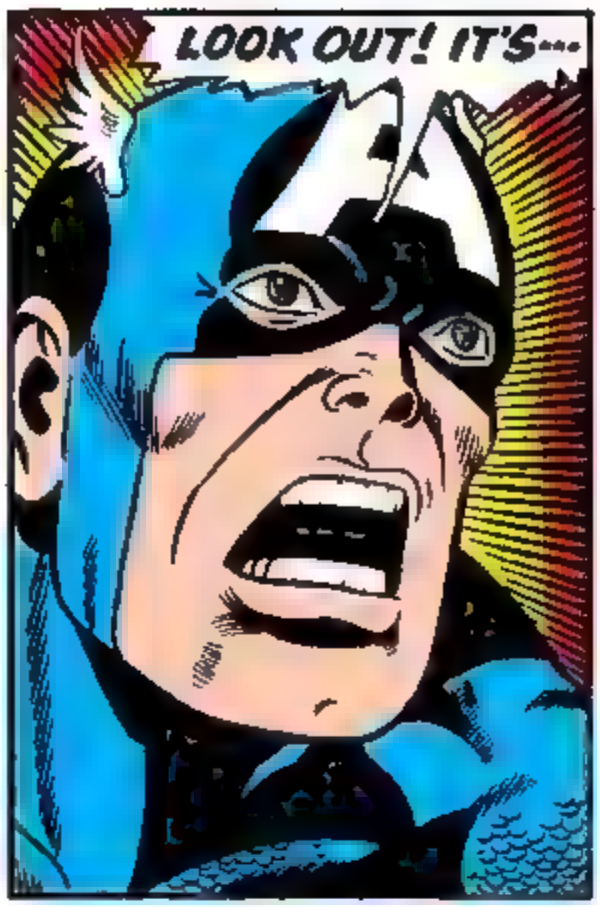

--IT COULD BE WORSE!
Uh oh!
YOU'VE SEEN OUR ADVANCED WEAPONRY BEFORE, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
NOW, SURRENDER, OR DIE!

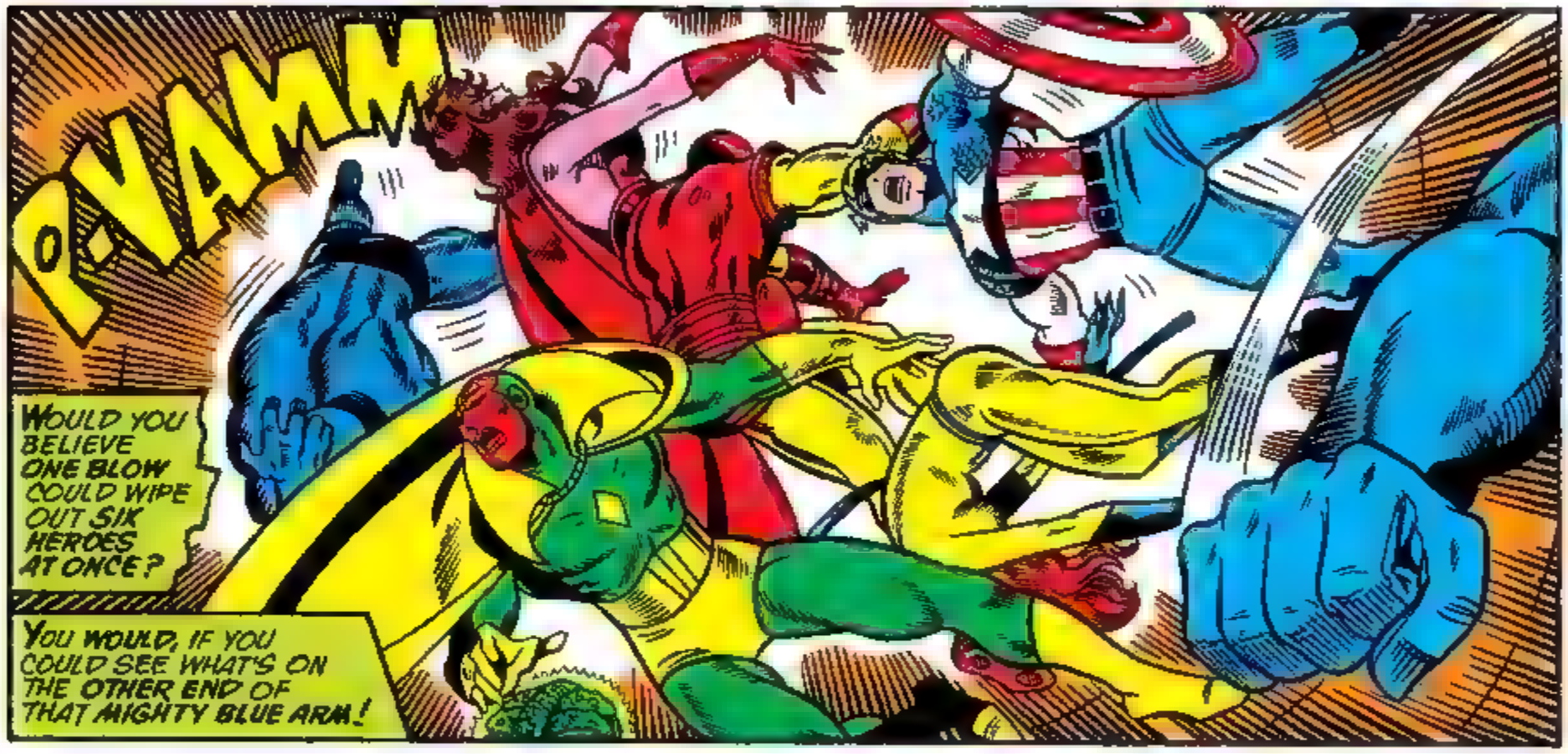
SURRENDER?
ONCE, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORCED TO DO JUST THAT, HAVING EXHAUSTED MY MUTANT ENERGY!
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THE SCARLET WITCH GREW INTO HER NAME!


K-WAM!

NOW THEN, ALPHONSE, SINCE YOU'VE BEEN SO GRACIOUS AS TO OPEN A LARGE HOLE IN YONDER WALL --
--WE'LL BE OFF LIKE A HERD OF TURTLES!
KLIP!

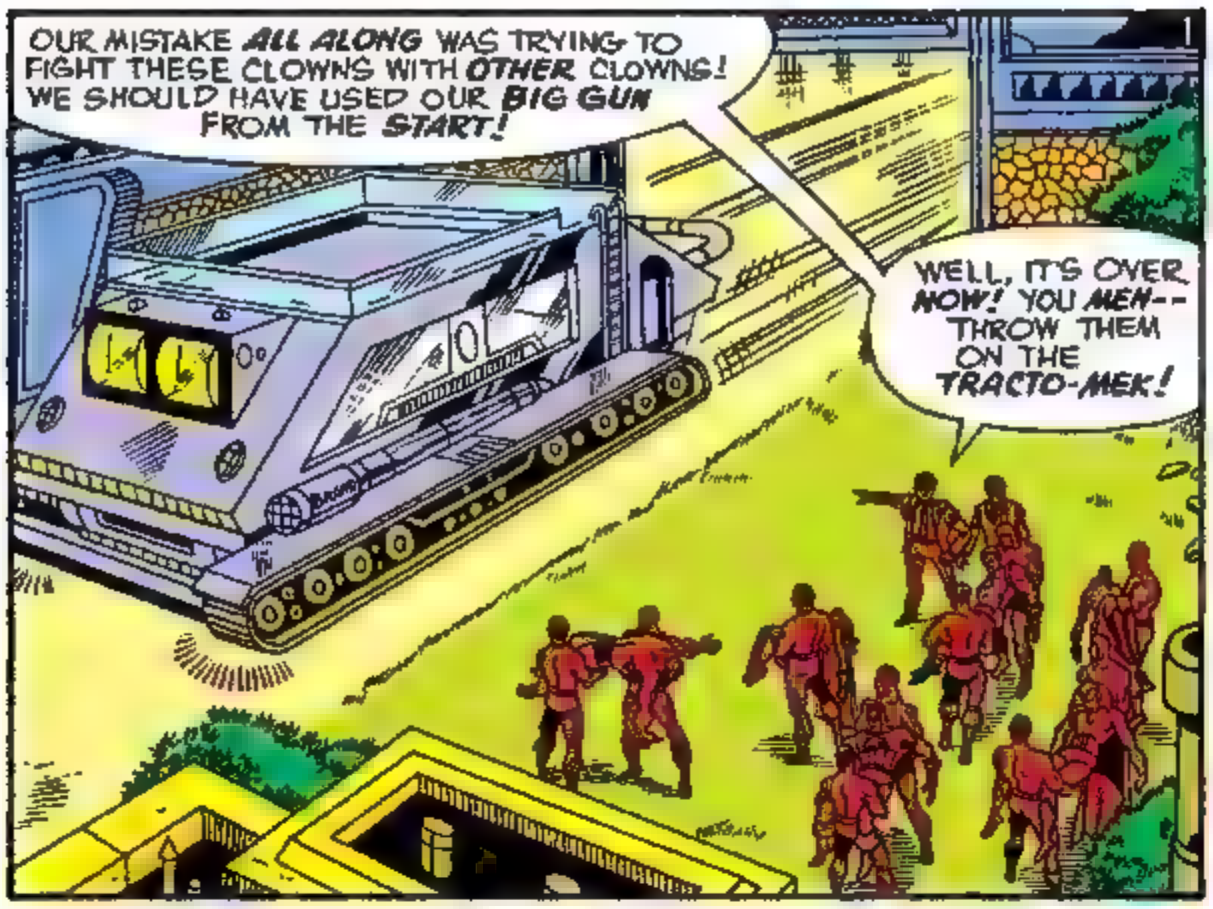
ACTUALLY, WE'LL BE OFF FASTER THAN THAT, BUT IT SOUNDED KINDA NEAT!
WAIT A MINUTE! THAT SHADOW--!


LOOK OUT! IT'S---

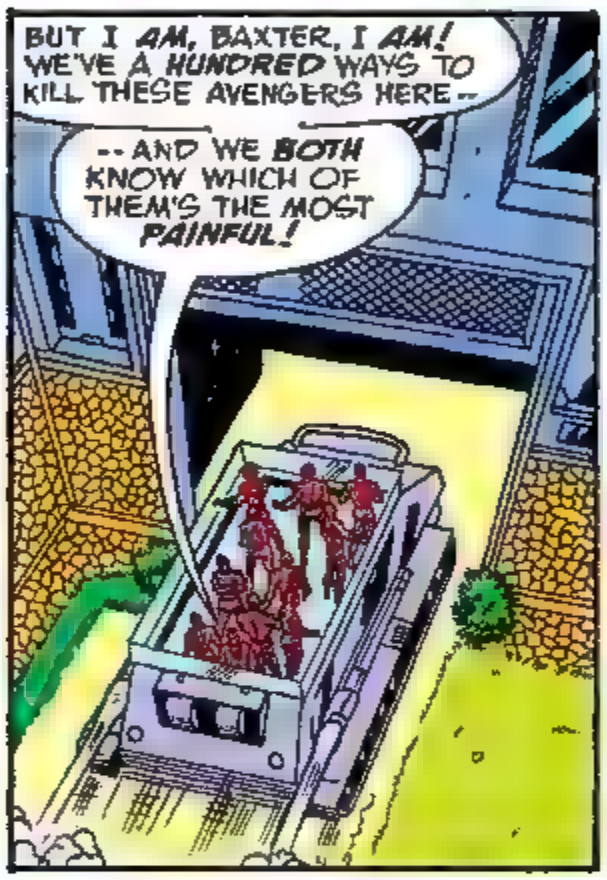

P-YAMM
WOULD YOU BELIEVE ONE BLOW COULD WIPE OUT SIX HEROES AT ONCE?
YOU WOULD, IF YOU COULD SEE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER END OF THAT MIGHTY BLUE ARM!

BUT THAT'S OUR SECRET FOR A FEW MOMENTS MORE!
WHEN CAPTAIN BAXTER'S REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE, THE MYSTERIOUS MENACE HAS VANISHED!
GOOD LORD!

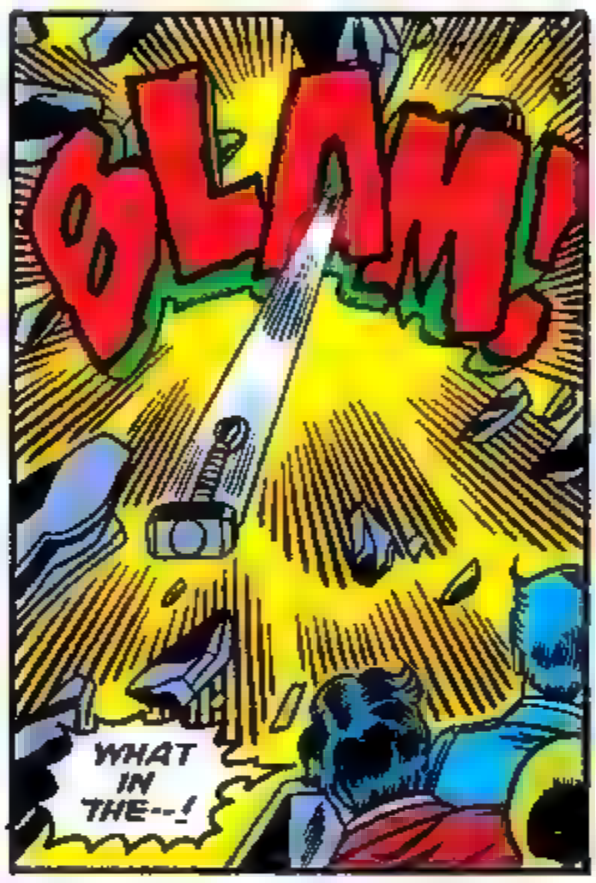
WAS IT-- THE WEAPON, SIR?
YOU BET, BAXTER!
IT EVEN K.O.'D IRON MAN INSIDE HIS SHELL!


OUR MISTAKE ALL ALONG WAS TRYING TO FIGHT THESE CLOWNS WITH OTHER CLOWNS! WE SHOULD HAVE USED OUR BIG GUN FROM THE START!
WELL, IT'S OVER NOW! YOU MEN-- THROW THEM ON THE TRACTO-MEK!

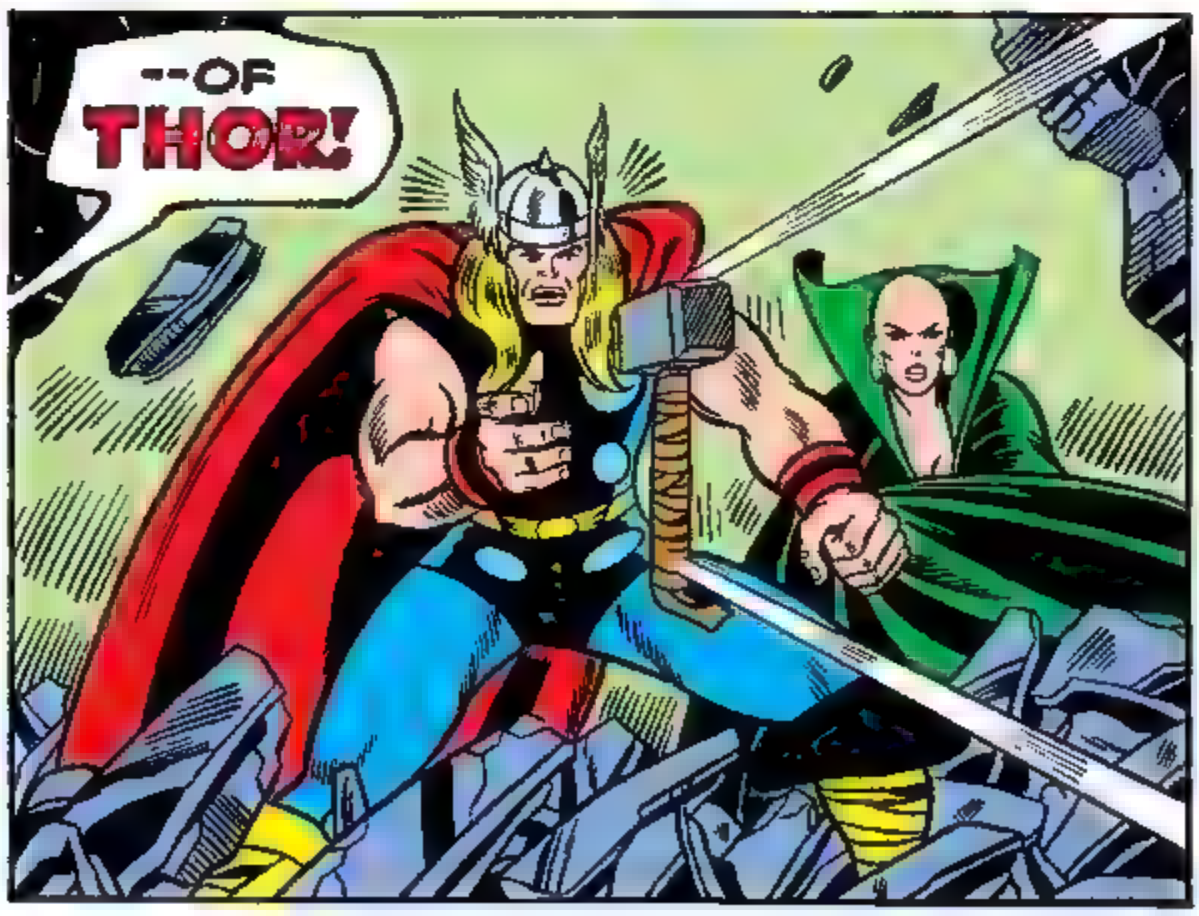
IT'S TIMES LIKE THESE WHEN I REALLY APPRECIATE ALL THE SCIENTIFIC WONDERS THIS CONGLOMERATE HAS, HIDDEN BEHIND ITS WALLS!
YOU'RE NOT PLANNING--!?


BUT I AM, BAXTER, I AM! WE'VE A HUNDRED WAYS TO KILL THESE AVENGERS HERE--
--AND WE BOTH KNOW WHICH OF THEM'S THE MOST PAINFUL!

ROXXON OIL AND THE BRAND CORPORATION OPERATE IN PERFECT SECURITY! ONCE THAT DOOR CLOSES, NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW---
BRAND


BLAM!
WHAT IN THE--!

TELL ME I DIDN'T SEE THAT!
YOU SAW IT, CAP'N!
THAT WAS THE HAMMER--

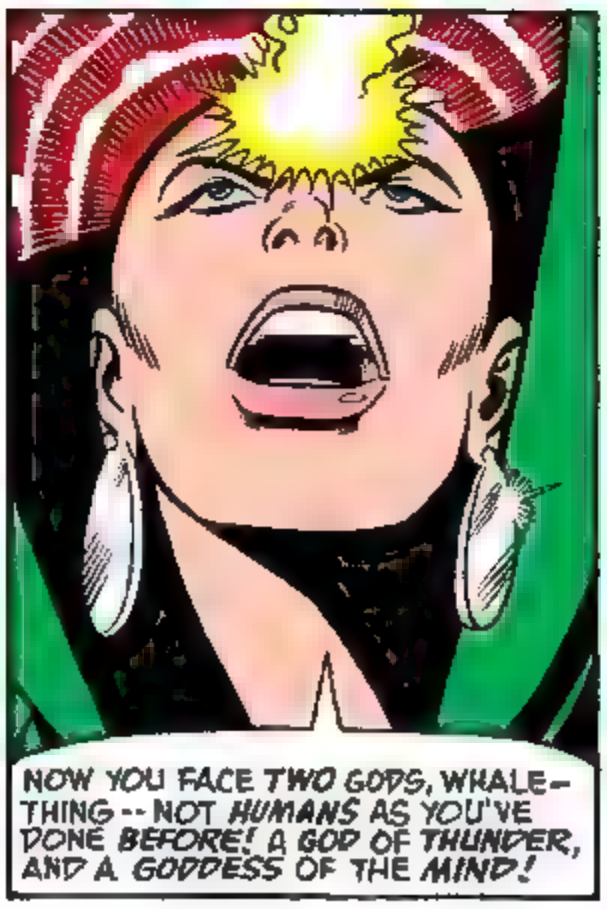

--OF THOR!

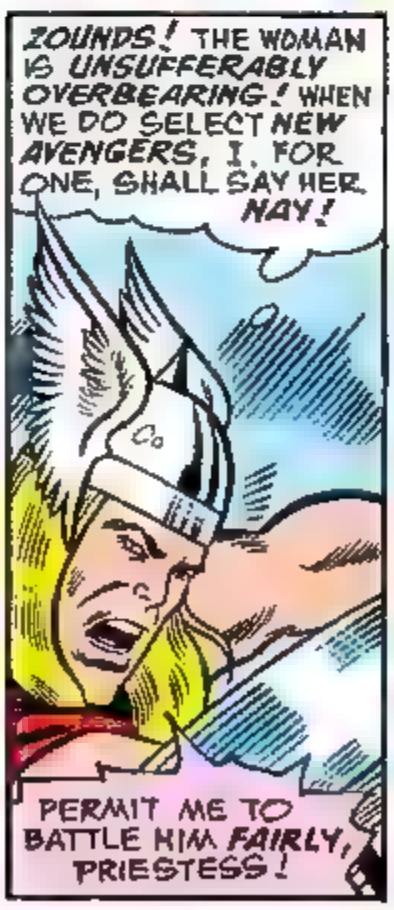
NO PROBLEM, MEN! AS ALWAYS, I'M PREPARED FOR ANYTHING!
WEAPON-ONE! YOU'RE NEEDED AGAIN!
THOR! BEHIND US--!
ODIN'S BLOOD!
NO, PUNY ONE! IT WILL BE YOUR BLOOD THAT FLOWS, AFTER YOU'VE FACED THE MURDEROUS FURY OF--
--ORKA, THE HUMAN KILLER WHALE!*
*I REMEMBER HIM FROM SUB-MARINER #23, 24, 66 AND 67. DO YOU?--WOLFMAN MARY.
HAPPY LANDINGS, AVENGER.
BRING US THE PIECES WHEN YOU FINISH, WEAPON-ONE!

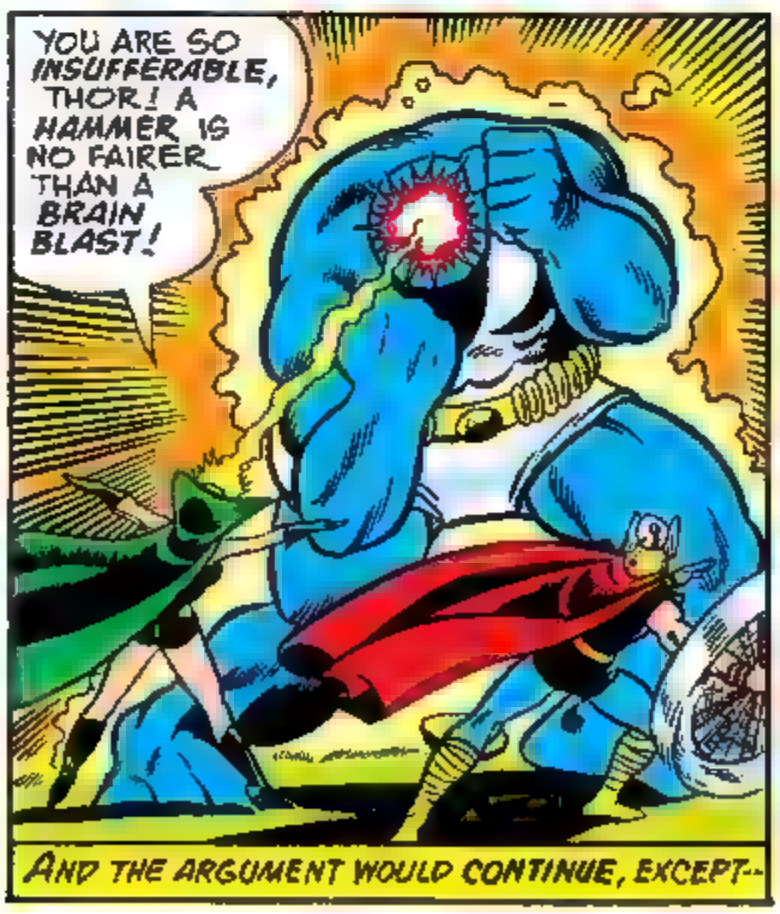
ZZZZ
ONE GREAT BLUE BRUTE, 'GAINST MOONDRAGON AND MYSELF? MORTAL, THOU MUST BE MAD!
NO MATTER THIS CREATURE'S MIGHT, IT SHALL BE AS NAUGHT BEFORE--

UNNGH!
YOUR HAMMER IS-- POWERFUL, AVENGER--
--BUT NOW YOU SEE MY SECRET!
FOOM!
--MIGHTY MJOLNIR!
NO DOUBT YOUR STRENGTH HAS TRIPLED AS WELL--THOUGH I HAVE NO IDEA FROM WHEN--
SINCE THE SERPENT CROWN CALLED ME FROM THE SEA, BRAND TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED ME IN MANY WAYS! NOT ONLY HAS MY HEIGHT INCREASED THREEFOLD--
BLAM
--BUT THE THICKNESS OF MY BLUBBER HAS DONE THE SAME! I HARDLY FEEL YOUR BLOWS!

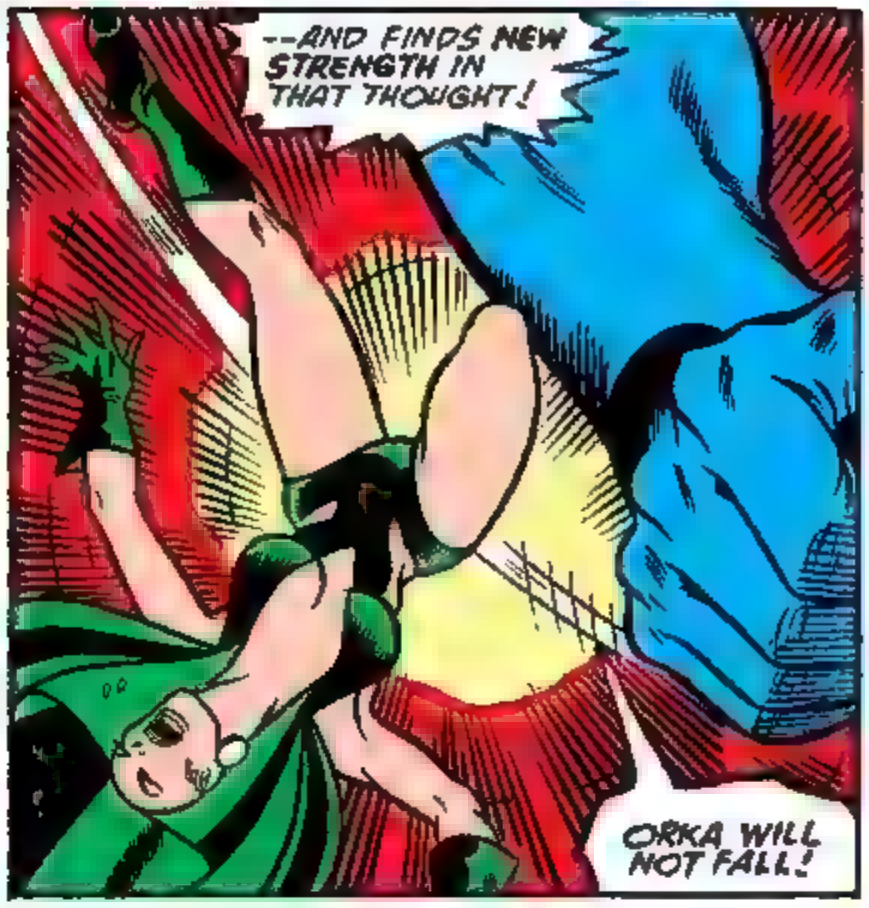
--BUT YOUR THOUGHTS ARE AS VULNERABLE AS EVER!
ARRGH!


NOW YOU FACE TWO GODS, WHALE-THING--NOT HUMANS AS YOU'VE DONE BEFORE! A GOD OF THUNDER, AND A GODDESS OF THE MIND!


ZOUNDS! THE WOMAN IS UNSUFFERABLY OVERBEARING! WHEN WE DO SELECT NEW AVENGERS, I, FOR ONE, SHALL SAY HER NAY!
PERMIT ME TO BATTLE HIM FAIRLY, PRIESTESS!


YOU ARE SO INSUFFERABLE, THOR! A HAMMER IS NO FAIRER THAN A BRAIN BLAST!
AND THE ARGUMENT WOULD CONTINUE, EXCEPT--

--THE HUMAN KILLER WHALE HAS VERY LITTLE BRAIN TO BLAST!
SUDDENLY, ORKA REALIZES THAT THE BLACK PAIN WILL GET NO WORSE--


--AND FINDS NEW STRENGTH IN THAT THOUGHT!
ORKA WILL NOT FALL!

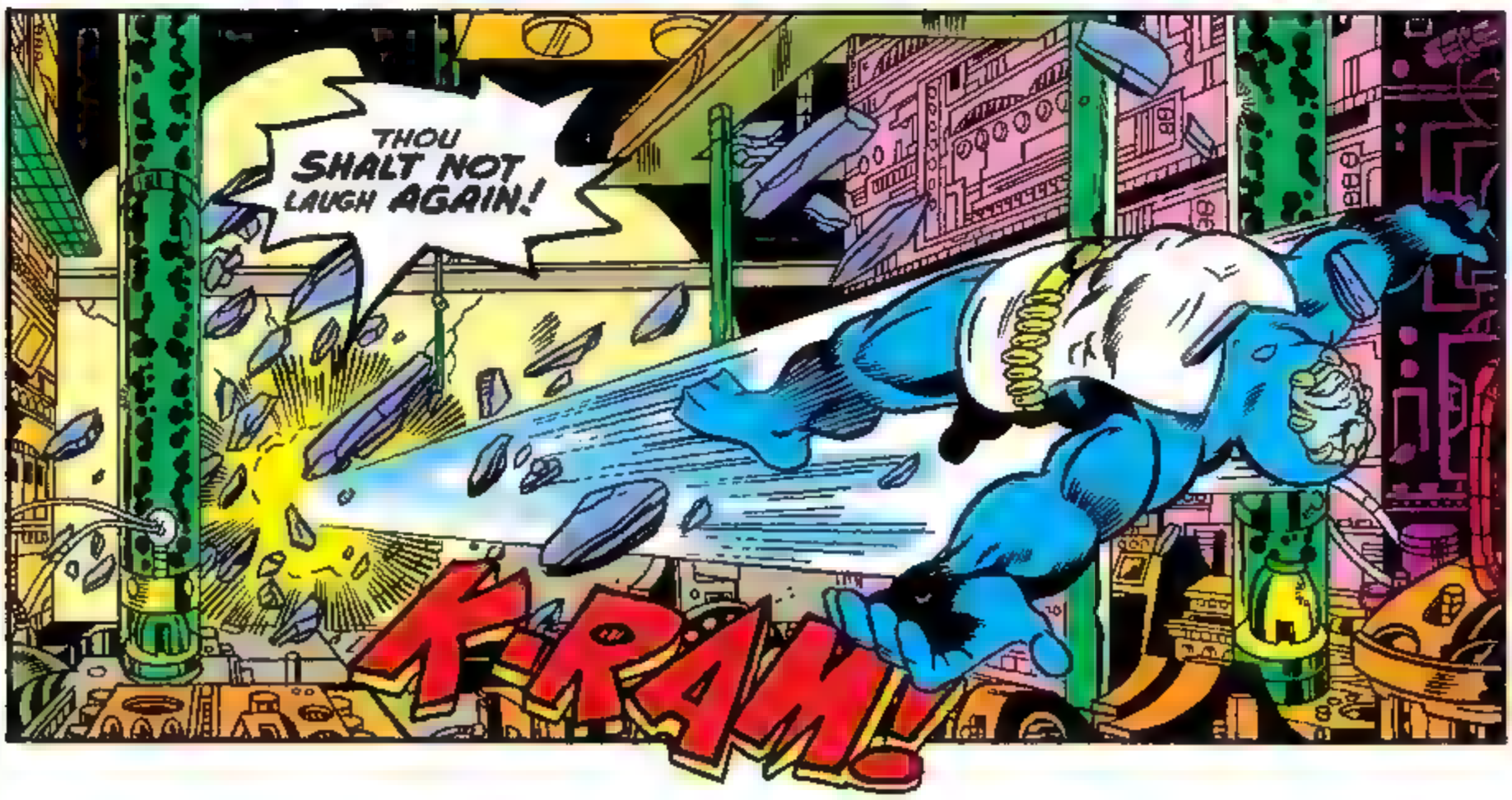
BY ASGARD'S GLEAMING GATES! MOONDRAGON IS DOWN!

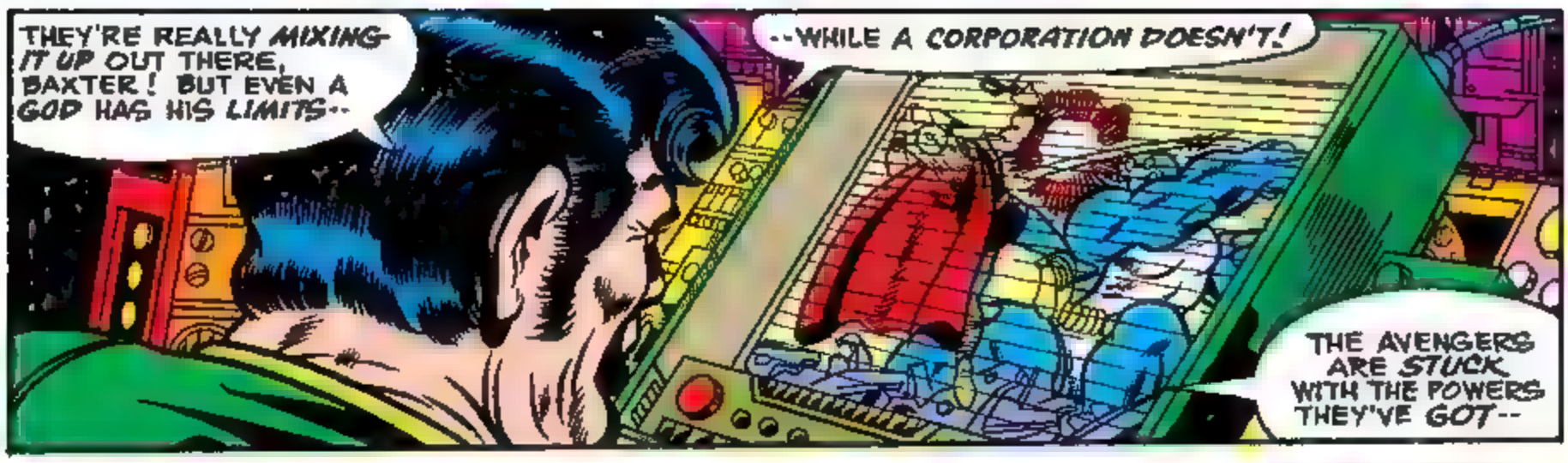
'TIS MY MIS-FORTUNE, THOUGH, THAT SHE MUST RISE AGAIN--

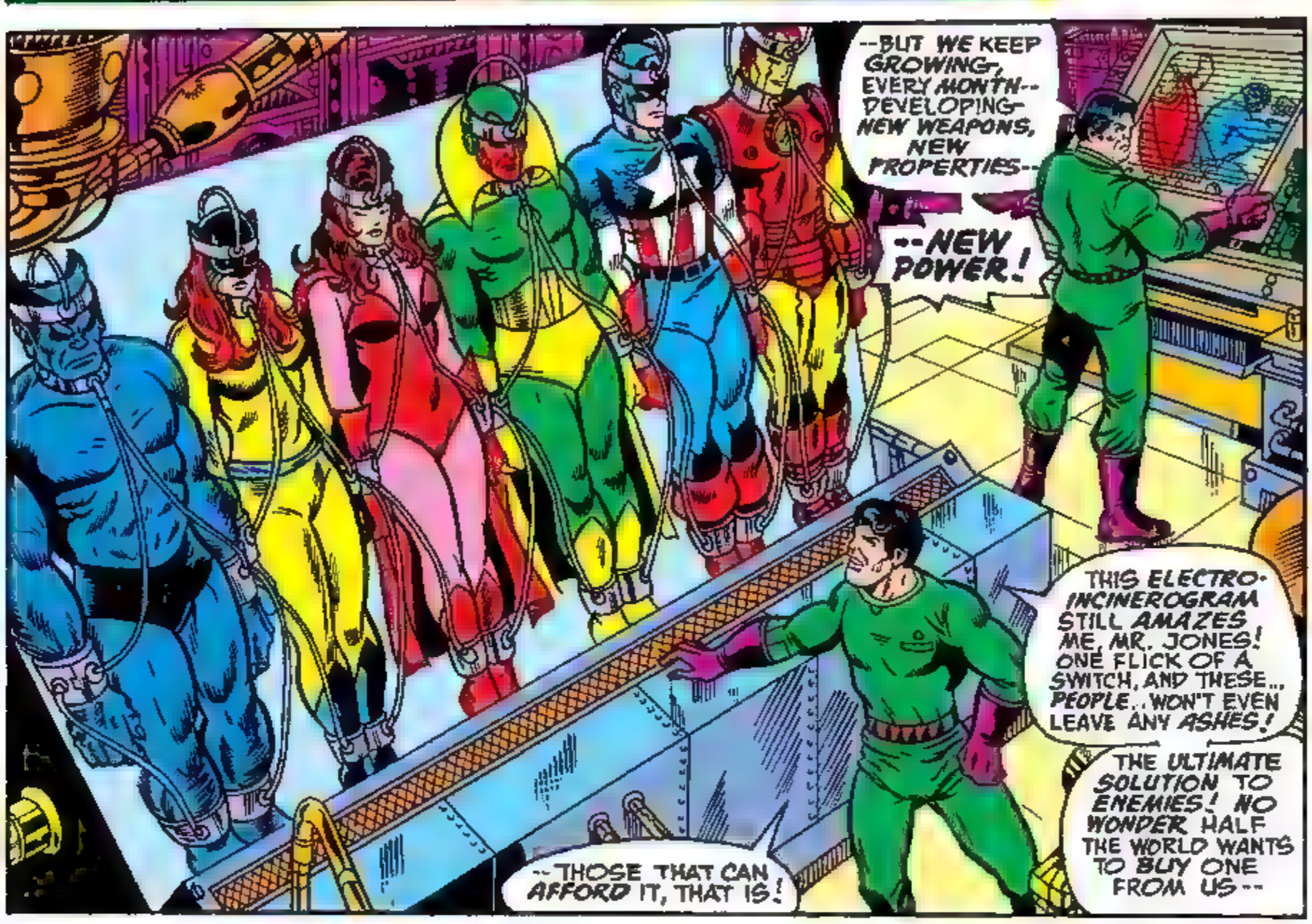
--TO BEDEVIL ME FURTHER WITH HER DELUSIONS OF--
--SUPERIORITY--?

HO HO HO! A GODDESS, SHE SAID!
SHE'S AS PUNY AS HER FRIENDS!

STILL THY LAUGHTER, MONSTER! I'LL NOT SUFFER IT A MOMENT MORE!

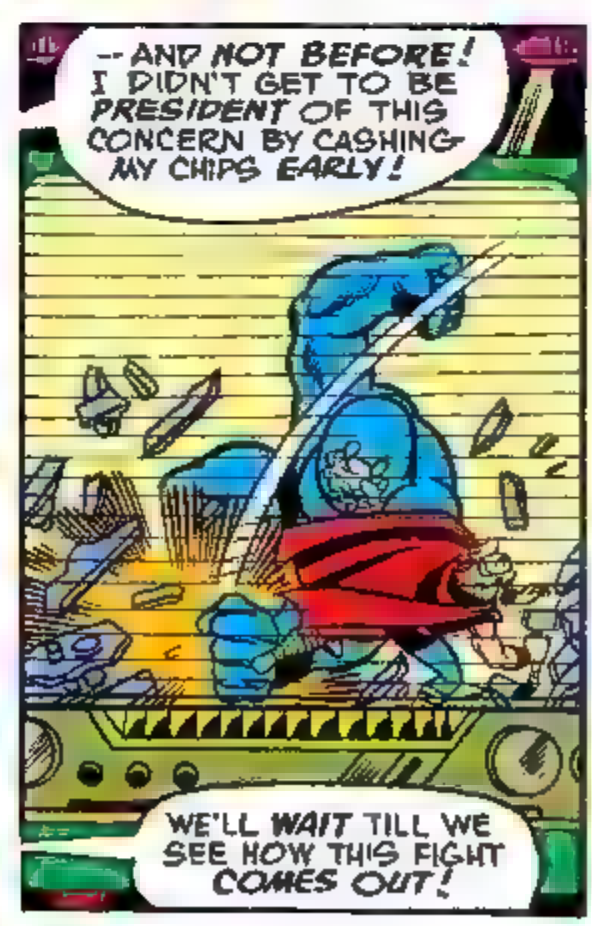

THOU SHALT NOT LAUGH AGAIN!
K-RAM!

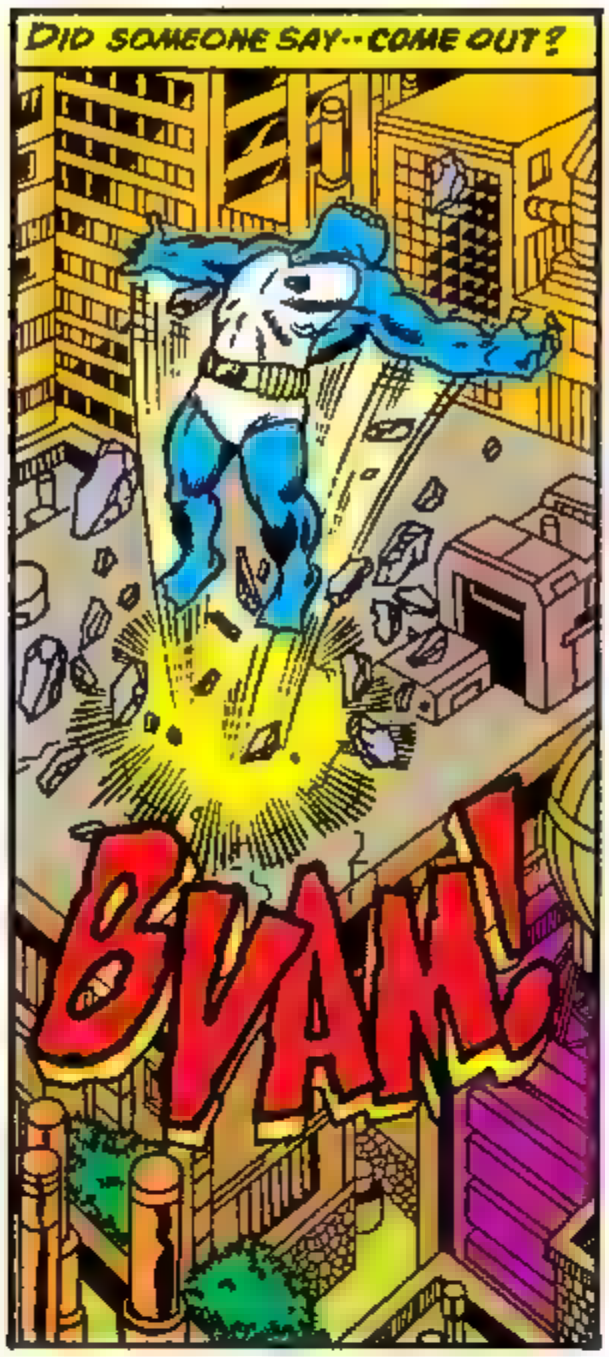

THEY'RE REALLY MIXING IT UP OUT THERE, BAXTER! BUT EVEN A GOD HAS HIS LIMITS--
--WHILE A CORPORATION DOESN'T!
THE AVENGERS ARE STUCK WITH THE POWERS THEY'VE GOT--


--BUT WE KEEP GROWING, EVERY MONTH-- DEVELOPING NEW WEAPONS, NEW PROPERTIES--
--NEW POWER!
THIS ELECTRO-INCINEROGRAM STILL AMAZES ME, MR. JONES! ONE FLICK OF A SWITCH, AND THESE... PEOPLE.. WON'T EVEN LEAVE ANY ASHES!
THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO ENEMIES! NO WONDER HALF THE WORLD WANTS TO BUY ONE FROM US--
--THOSE THAT CAN AFFORD IT, THAT IS!

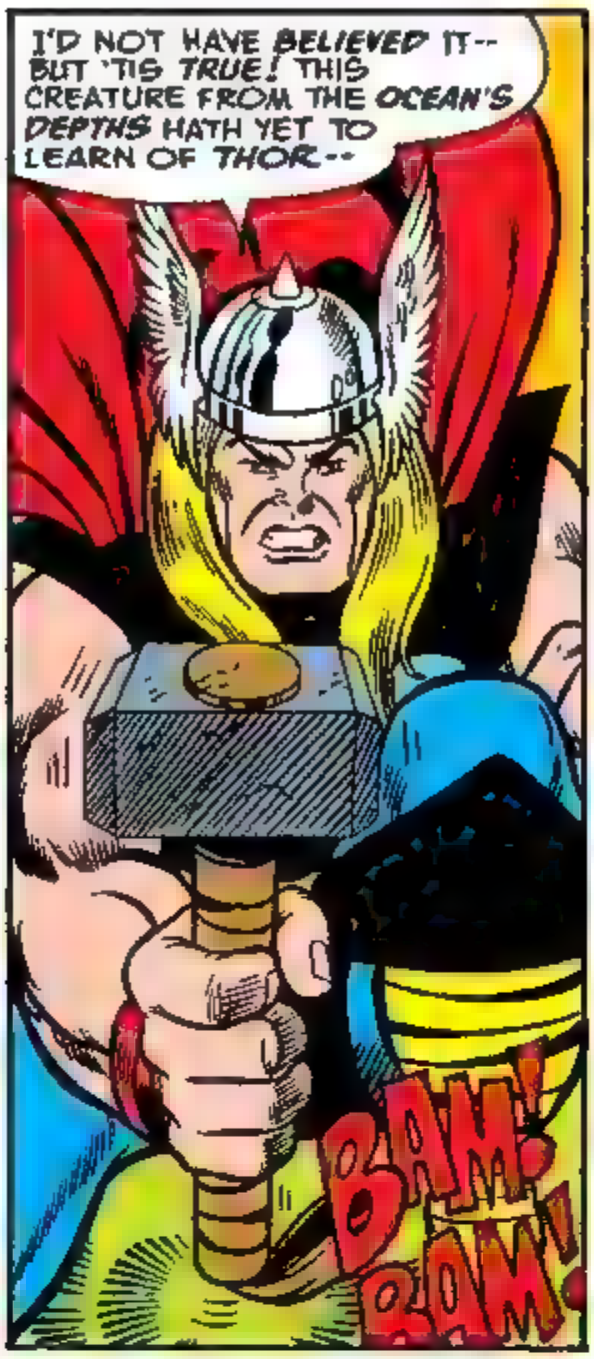
I SAY LET'S ZAP 'EM RIGHT NOW!
YOU'RE AWFULLY BLOOD-THIRSTY, BAXTER!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR EX-WIFE, THE HELLCAT?

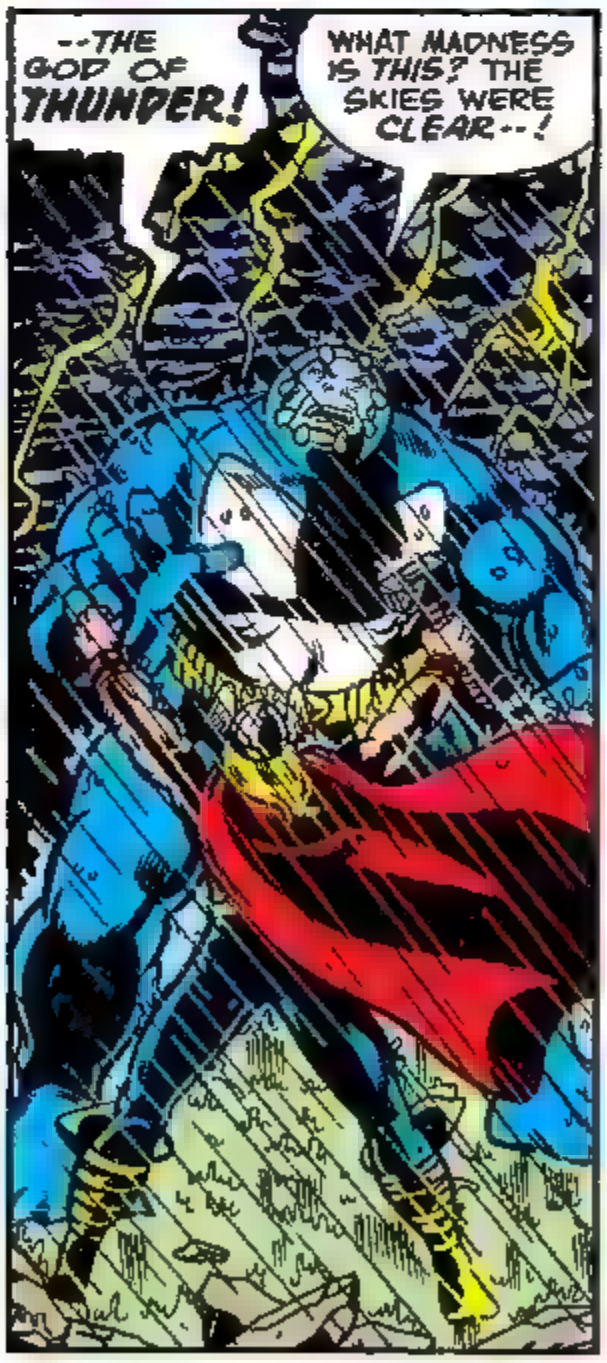
WHAT ABOUT HER? SHE TURNED AGAINST ME-- DIVORCED ME, DIDN'T SHE?
SHE DIDN'T LIKE HOW I TOOK TO BRAND'S WAYS SO QUICKLY--
--BUT I LIKE IT, AND I'M GOING TO LIKE IT BEST WHEN I SHOW HER I WAS RIGHT!
ON MY SIGNAL, CAPTAIN--

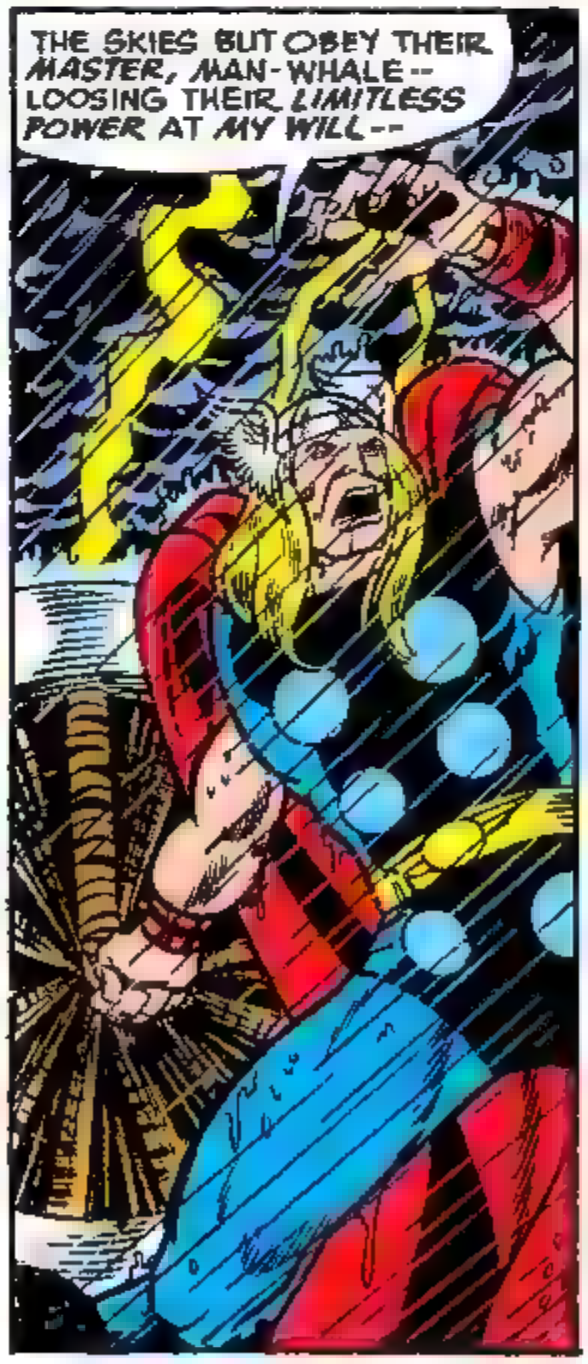

--AND NOT BEFORE! I DIDN'T GET TO BE PRESIDENT OF THIS CONCERN BY CASHING MY CHIPS EARLY!
WE'LL WAIT TILL WE SEE HOW THIS FIGHT COMES OUT!

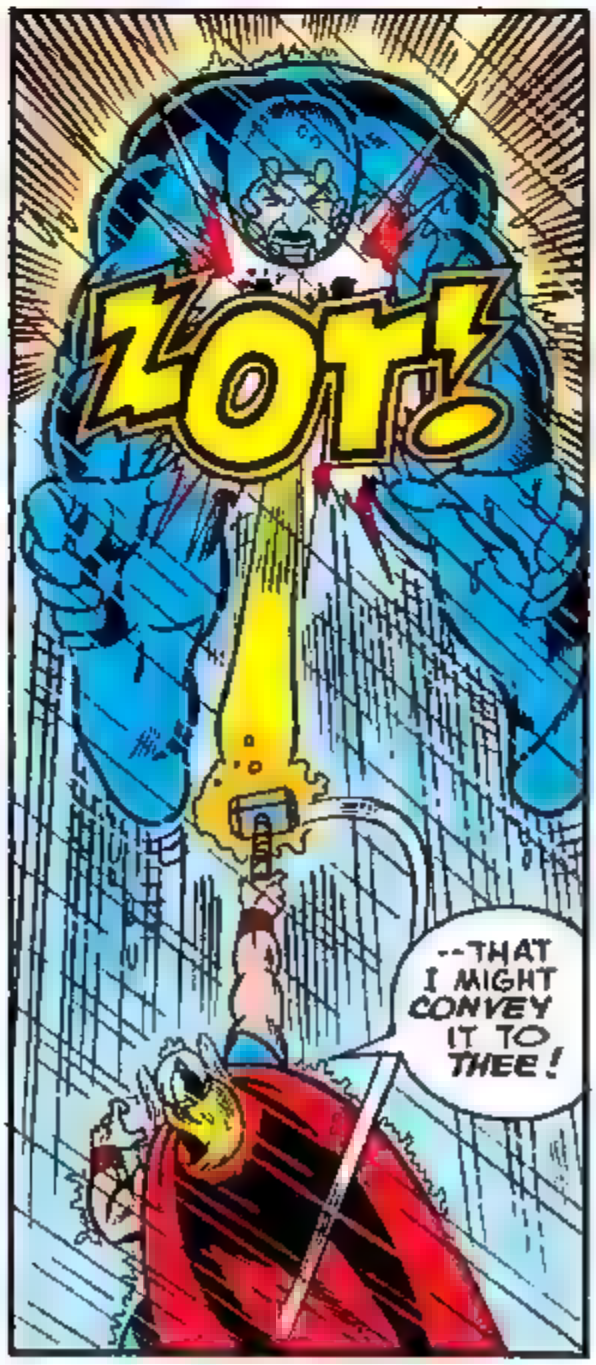

DID SOMEONE SAY--COME OUT?
BVAM!

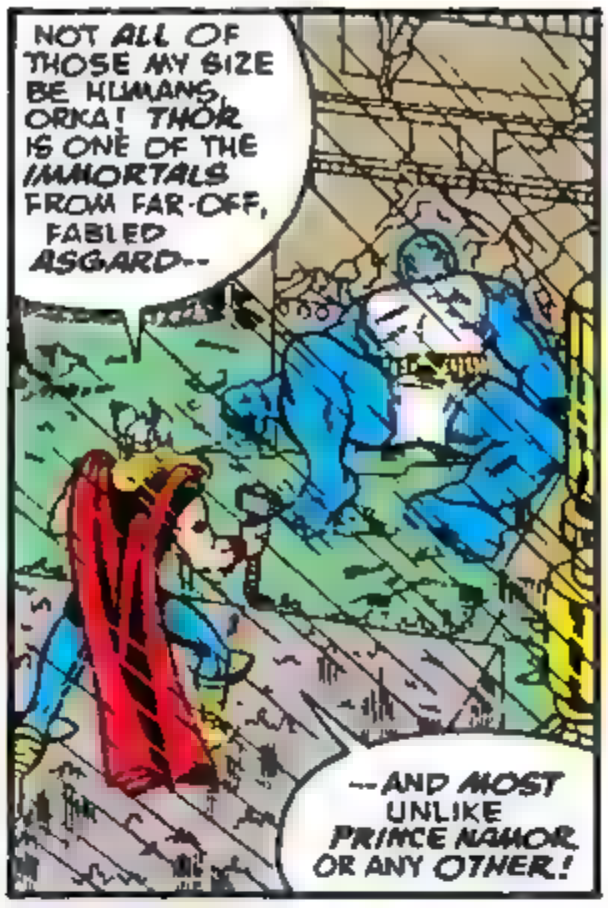
SURELY THAT WELL-STRUCK BLOW HATH-- BUT NAY! THE GIANT DOTH SEEM BARELY SCATHED!
WILL YOU NEVER LEARN, AVENGER? ORKA BESTED THE NOBLE SUB-MARINER IN DAYS GONE BY!
NOW I AM TRULY INVINCIBLE! HUMANS OF YOUR SIZE, DESPITE YOUR PRETENTIONS OF DIVINITY--
--MUST ALWAYS FALL TO ME!


I'D NOT HAVE BELIEVED IT-- BUT 'TIS TRUE! THIS CREATURE FROM THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS HATH YET TO LEARN OF THOR--
BAM! BAM!

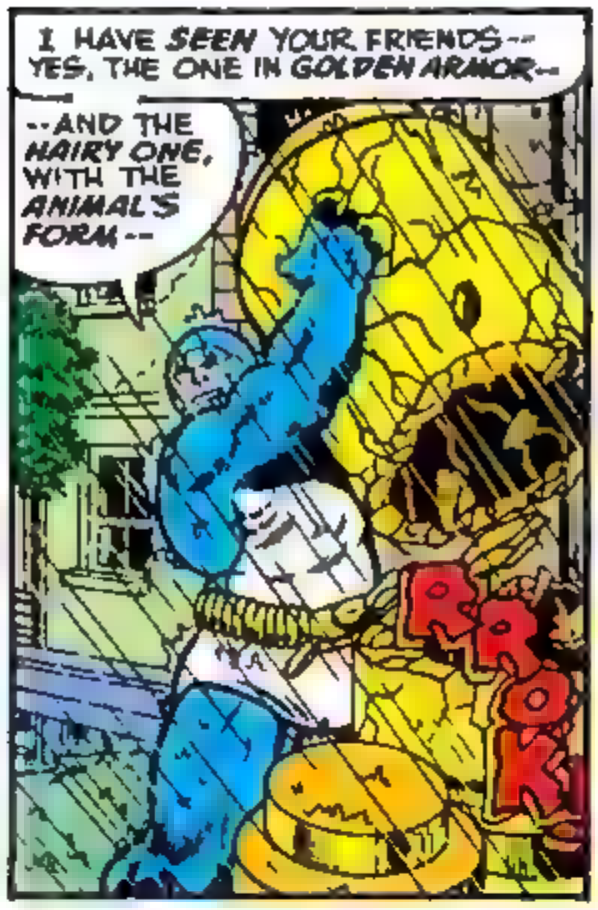

--THE GOD OF THUNDER!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS? THE SKIES WERE CLEAR--!

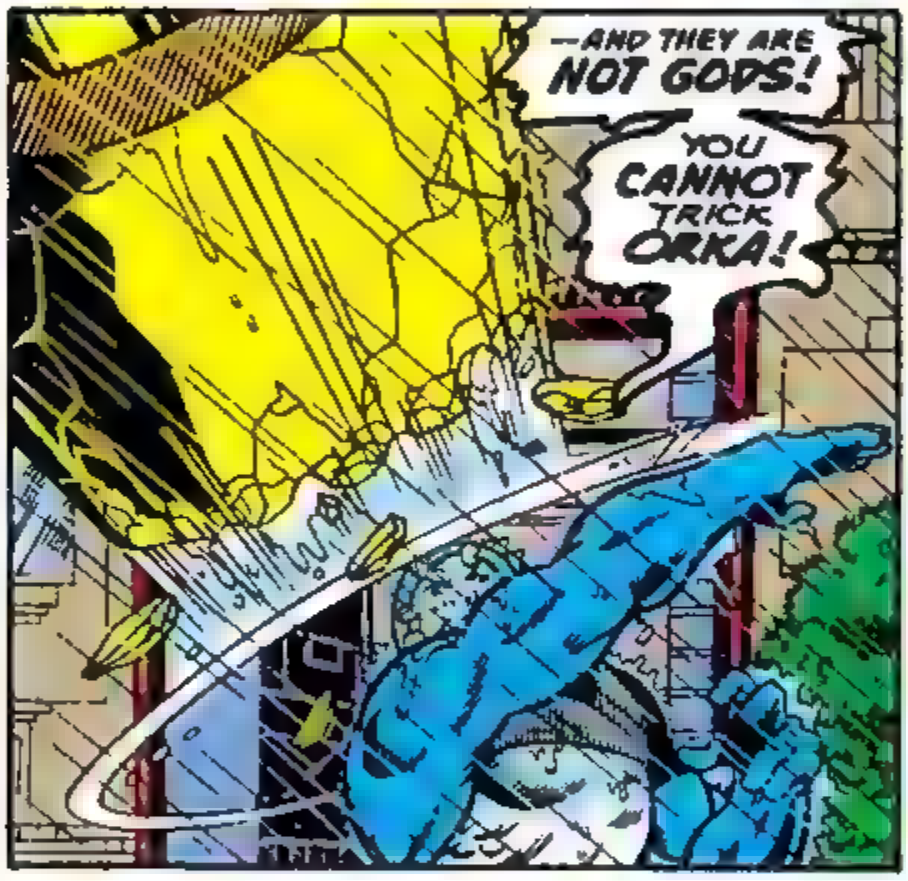

THE SKIES BUT OBEY THEIR MASTER, MAN-WHALE-- LOOSING THEIR LIMITLESS POWER AT MY WILL--

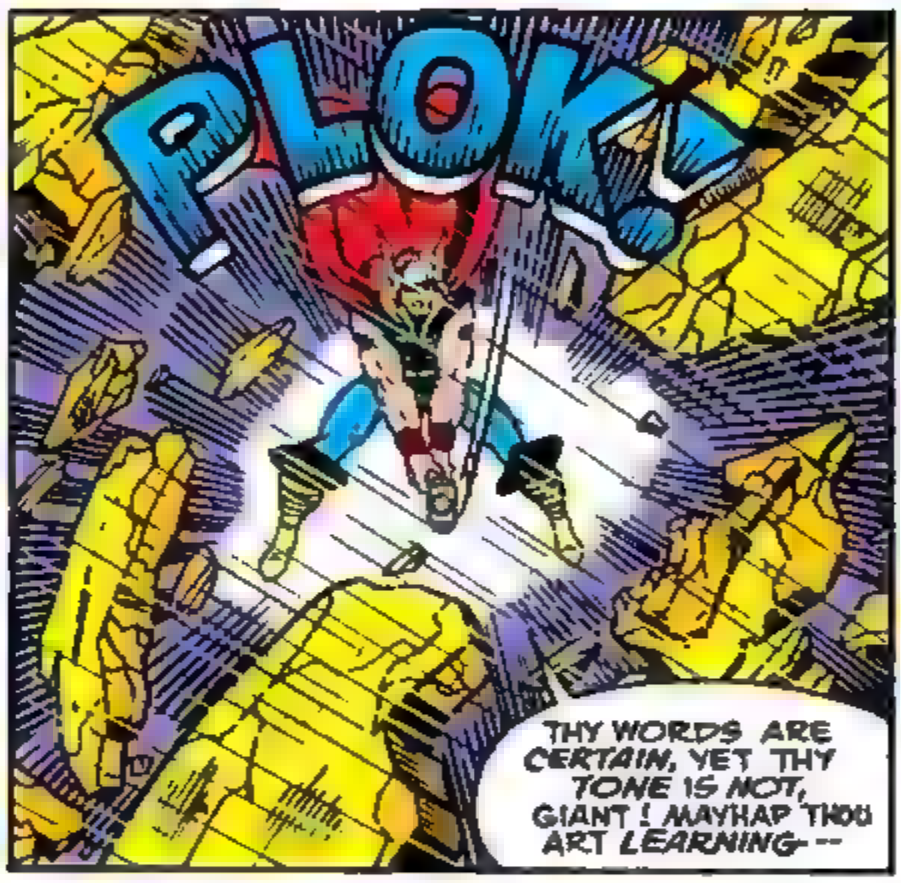

ZOT!
--THAT I MIGHT CONVEY IT TO THEE!

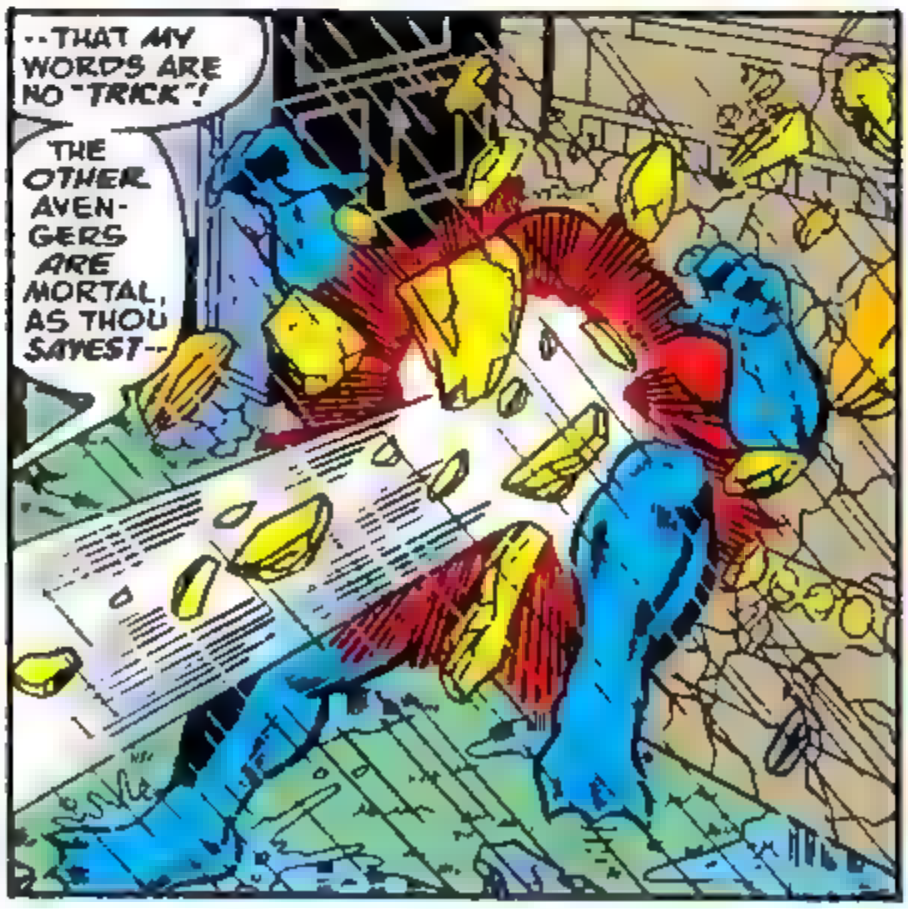

NOT ALL OF THOSE MY SIZE BE HUMANS, ORKA! THOR IS ONE OF THE IMMORTALS FROM FAR-OFF, FABLED ASGARD--
--AND MOST UNLIKE PRINCE NAMOR, OR ANY OTHER!

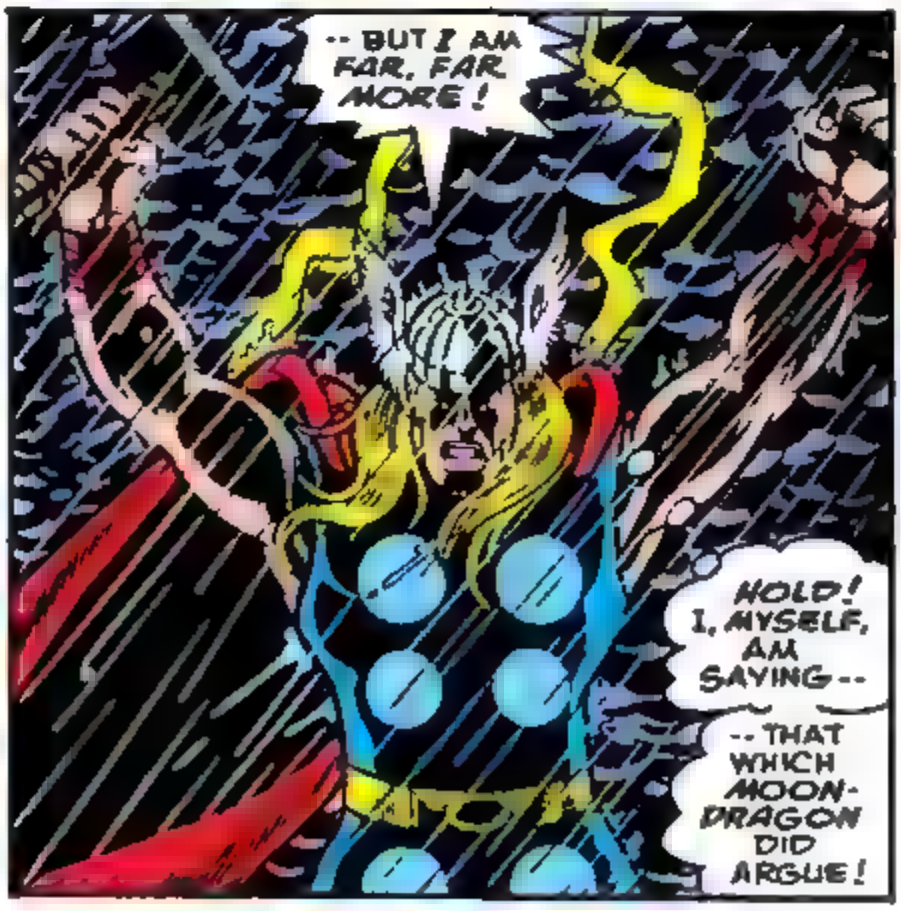
NO!
YOU THINK, BECAUSE ORKA IS NOT SMART, THAT YOU CAN TRICK ME SOME-HOW! BUT ORKA IS SMARTER THAN YOU THINK!

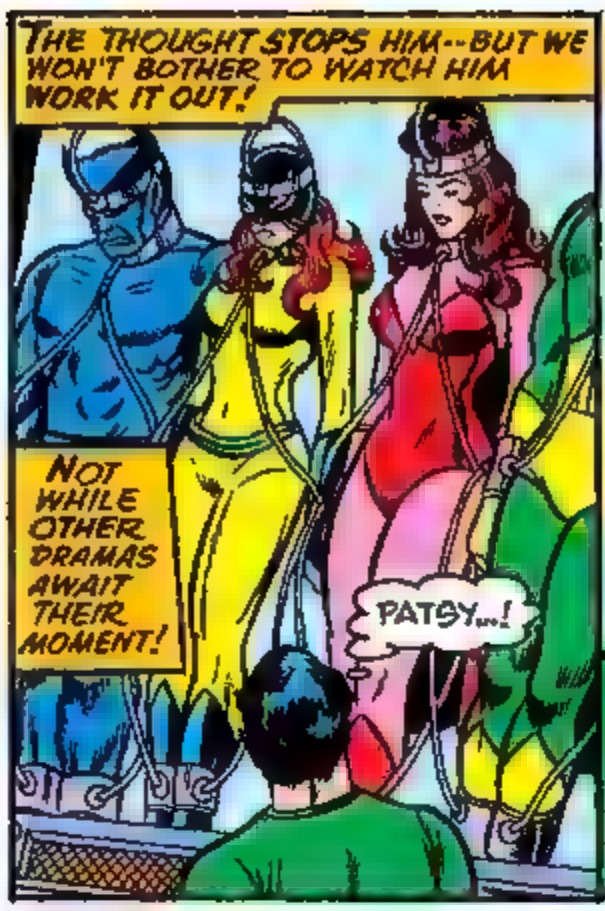

I HAVE SEEN YOUR FRIENDS-- YES, THE ONE IN GOLDEN ARMOR--
--AND THE HAIRY ONE, WITH THE ANIMAL'S FORM--
RROK


--AND THEY ARE NOT GODS!
YOU CANNOT TRICK ORKA!


PLOK!
THY WORDS ARE CERTAIN, YET THY TONE IS NOT, GIANT! MAYHAP THOU ART LEARNING--

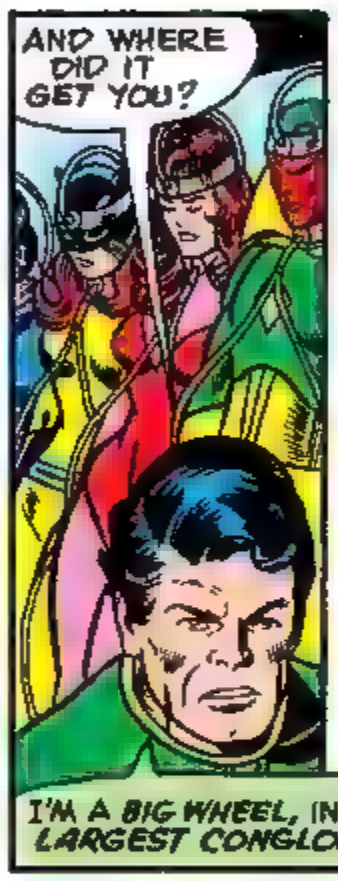

--THAT MY WORDS ARE NO "TRICK"!
THE OTHER AVEN-GERS ARE MORTAL, AS THOU SAYEST--


--BUT I AM FAR, FAR MORE!
HOLD! I, MYSELF, AM SAYING--
--THAT WHICH MOON-DRAGON DID ARGUE!


THE THOUGHT STOPS HIM--BUT WE WON'T BOTHER TO WATCH HIM WORK IT OUT!
NOT WHILE OTHER DRAMAS AWAIT THEIR MOMENT!
PATSY...!

YOU DUMB BROAD! YOU JUST NEVER GOT OUT OF CENTERVILLE, DID YOU? YOU NEVER LEARNED THAT THE LIVES WE LED THERE--
--FULL OF PUPPY LOVE, AND BIG SMILES, AND INTEGRITY--
BAXTER

--AND DREAMS OF SUPERHEROES--!
PATSY, THOSE LIVES WEREN'T REAL LIFE! WE HAD TO GROW UP, LIKE I DID IN 'NAM--
--BUT YOU NEVER DID!

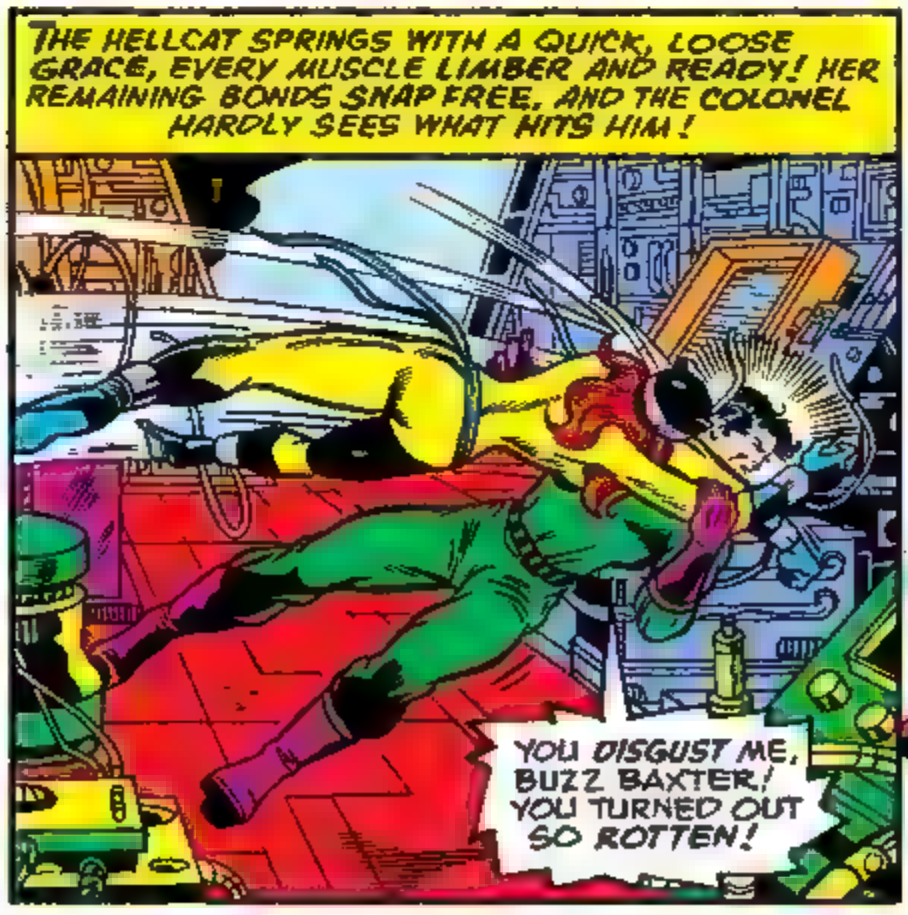

AND WHERE DID IT GET YOU?
I'M A BIG WHEEL, IN THE WORLD'S LARGEST CONGLOMERATE--

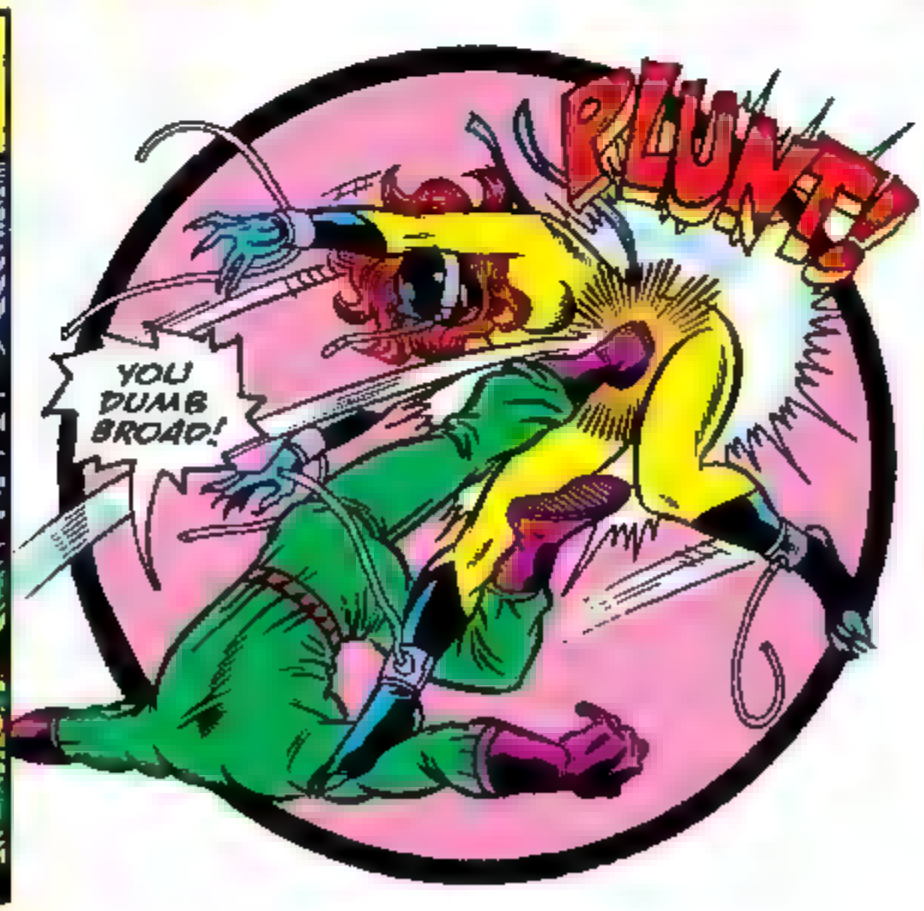
--AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO DIE!

I CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY! YOU COULD HAVE COME WITH ME--

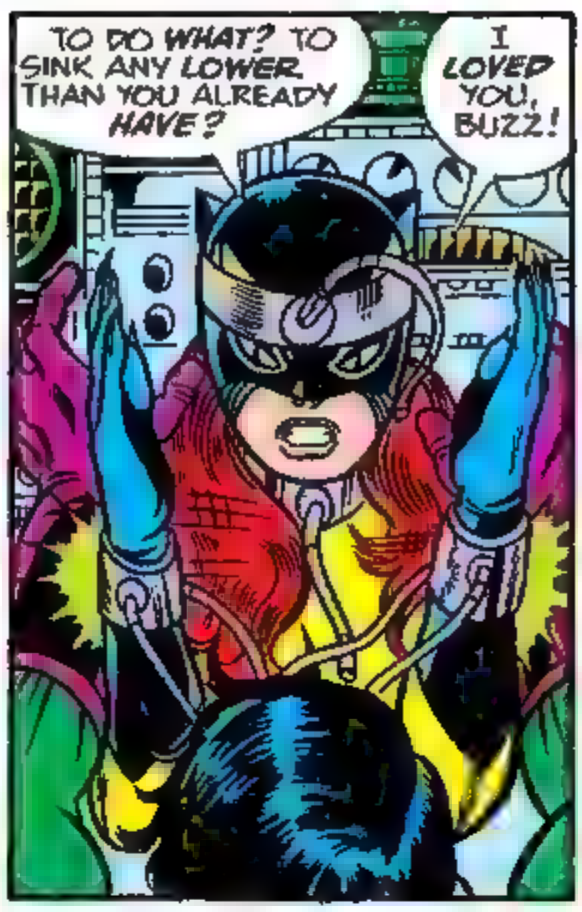
--BUT YOU CHOSE TO STAY BEHIND! SO WHEN JONES SAYS FLIP THE SWITCH--

WHAT TH--!
--I'LL--

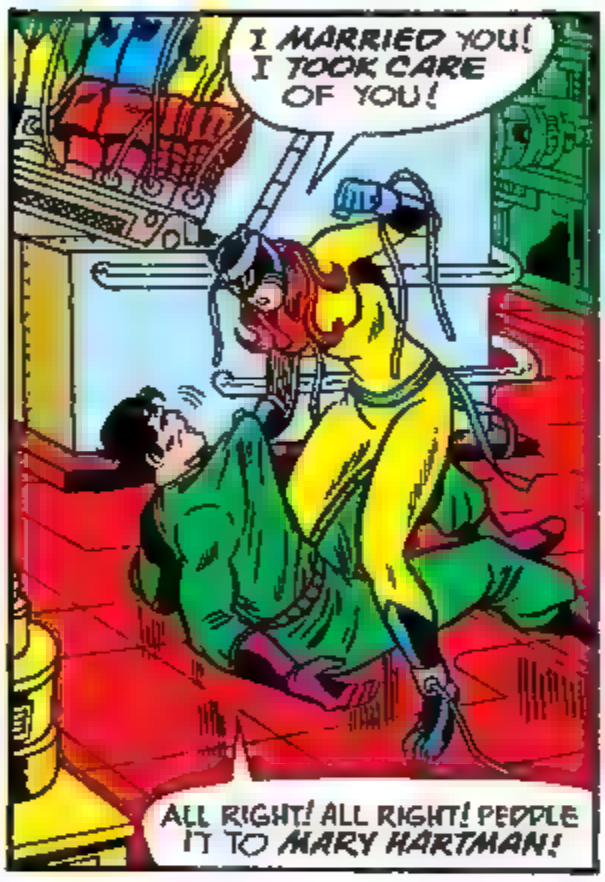

THE HELLCAT SPRINGS WITH A QUICK, LOOSE GRACE, EVERY MUSCLE LIMBER AND READY! HER REMAINING BONDS SNAP FREE, AND THE COLONEL HARDLY SEES WHAT HITS HIM!
YOU DISGUST ME, BUZZ BAXTER! YOU TURNED OUT SO ROTTEN!


PLUNT!
YOU DUMB BROAD!

YOU'VE GOT GUTS, PAT! THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS LIKED ABOUT YOU! BUT YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE SENSE OF A GOOSE!
ORKA MAY HAVE SLIPPED UP ON YOU--
BANG
--BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN ME A CHANCE ---


TO DO WHAT? TO SINK ANY LOWER THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE?
I LOVED YOU, BUZZ!

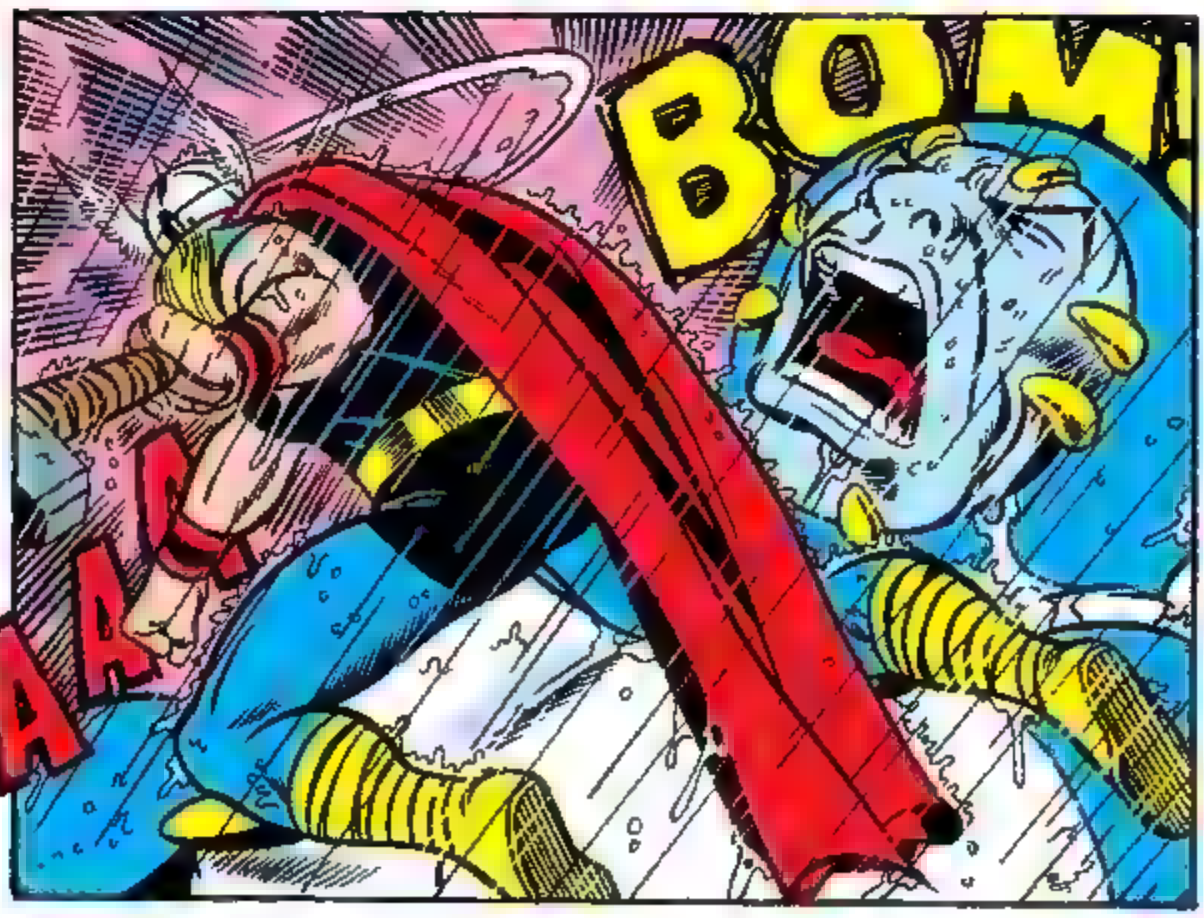
YOU WERE THE ONLY BOY I EVER WANTED!
BAM

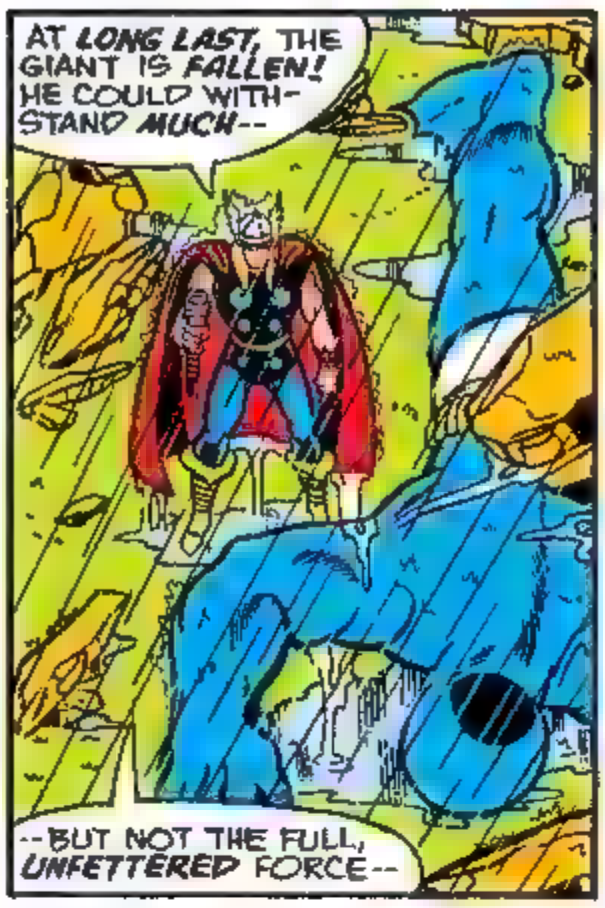

I MARRIED YOU! I TOOK CARE OF YOU!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! PEDDLE IT TO MARY HARTMAN!

SO YOU'VE GOT A BROKEN HEART AND A SUPER-SUIT! SO WHAT?

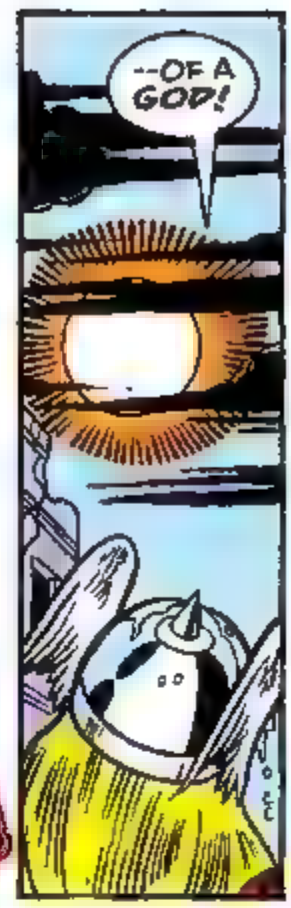
SO FREE MY FRIENDS, LOVER-BOY--
--OR I'LL SCRATCH YOUR EYES OUT!

AT THAT MOMENT...
AAAAAA

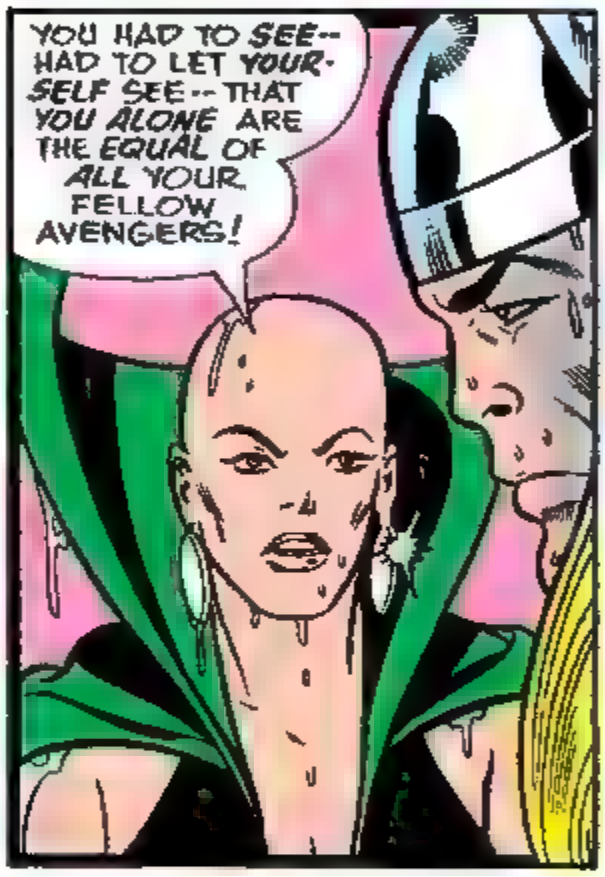

BOM


AT LONG LAST, THE GIANT IS FALLEN! HE COULD WITHSTAND MUCH--
--BUT NOT THE FULL, UNFETTERED FORCE--

BAM! BAM! BAM!


--OF A GOD!

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT SEE IT MY WAY, ASGARDIAN-- IF I GAVE YOU THE CHANCE!
MOONDRAGON! DOST THOU MEAN TO TELL ME--?
YES, THOR! I HAVE NOT BEEN UNCONSCIOUS ALL THIS WHILE!


YOU HAD TO SEE-- HAD TO LET YOURSELF SEE-- THAT YOU ALONE ARE THE EQUAL OF ALL YOUR FELLOW AVENGERS!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! HE BEAT ORKA! BUT THAT'S ALL HE'LL ACCOMPLISH!
BAXTER! FRY THE AVENGERS!
BAXTER--?!

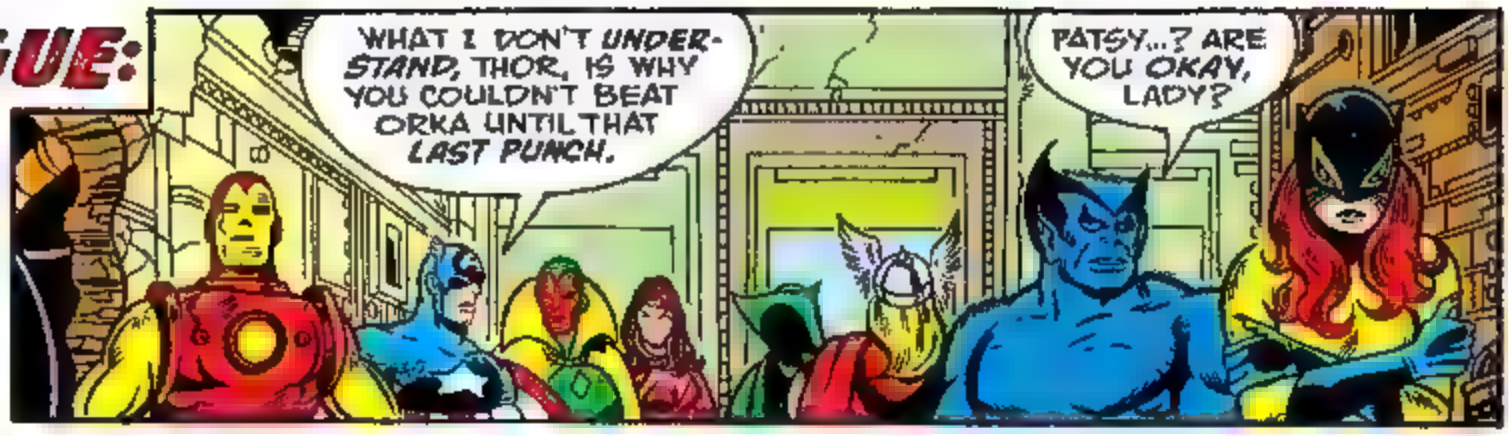
THERE'S NO ANSWER! HE-- HE MUST BE GOOFING OFF SOMEWHERE!
SURE! THAT'S WHAT'S HAPPENED!
I JUST HAVE TO GO DOWN THERE MYSELF AND FIND HIM! SURE! BECAUSE IF HE'S NOT JUST GOOFING OFF--

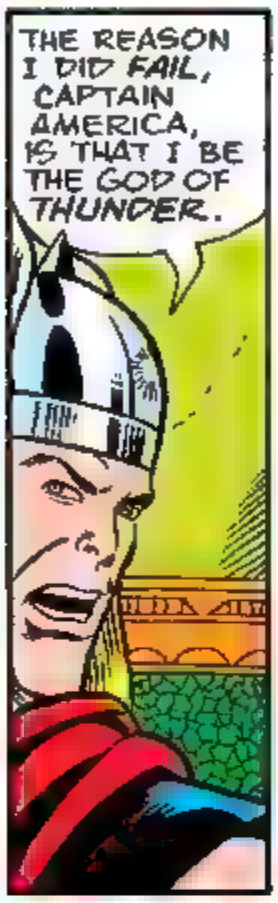
--IF HE'S--
BY THE GRANDEUR OF THE SERPENT, NO!
WELL, HELLO THERE! WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!

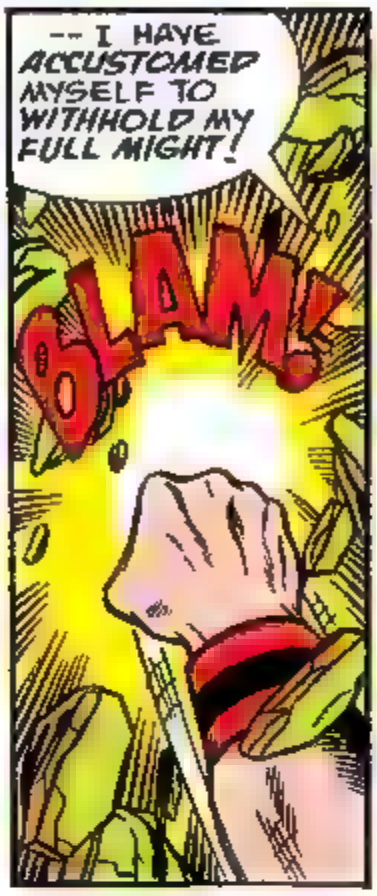
IT'S TIME TO PLAY-- TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES!

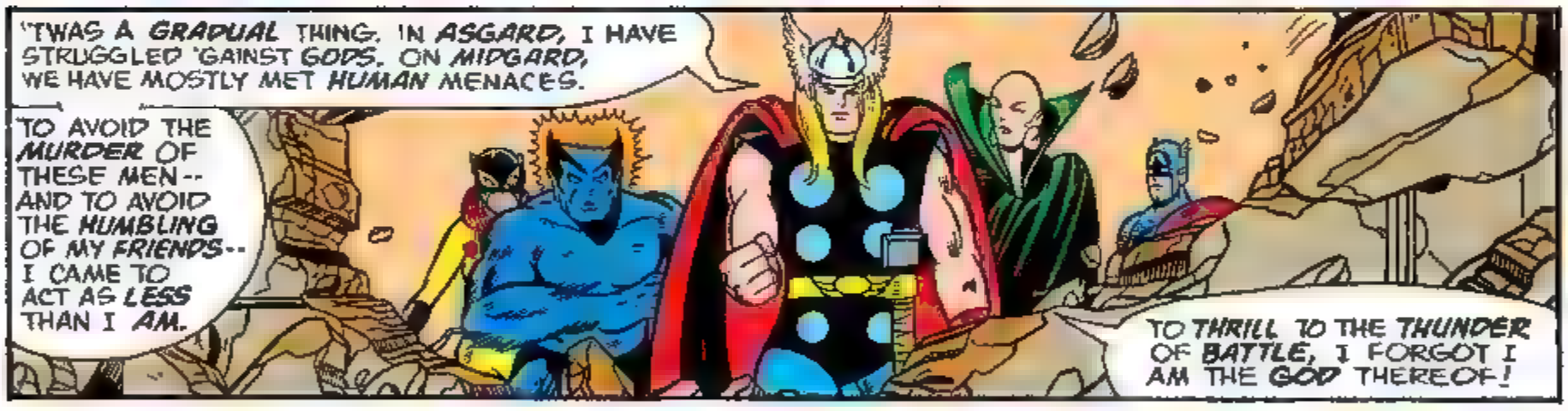
EPILOGUE:

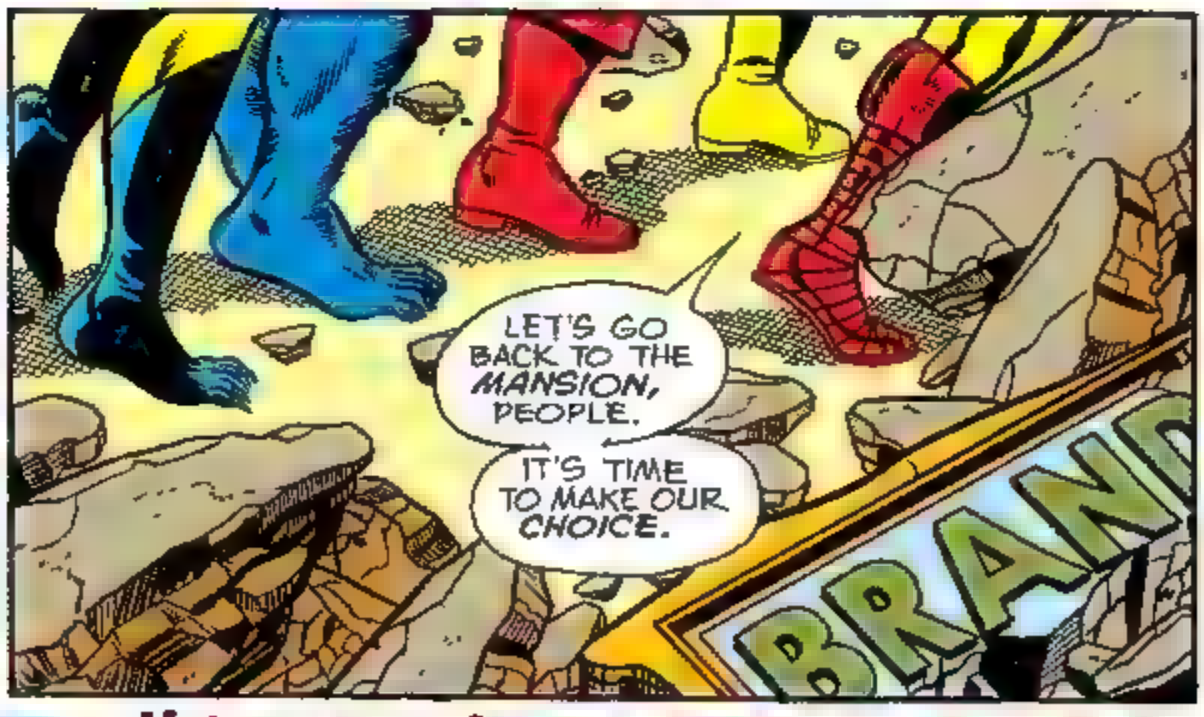
IT'S BEEN A LONG- AND OFTTIMES TREACHEROUS ROAD, BUT THE END HAS COME IN SIGHT. THERE REMAINS BUT THE TYING OF TWO LAST TANGLED THREADS.











NEXT ISSUE: The AVENGERS #150! 'NUFF SAID!

GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #5 (DECEMBER 1975) COVER
BY JOHN BUSCEMA & GEORGE ROUSSOS WITH ALTERATIONS BY JOHN ROMITA (FROM *AVENGERS ANNUAL* #1)
REPRINTING *AVENGERS ANNUAL* #1

F.O.O.M. #12 (DECEMBER 1975) TOOK A DEEP DIVE INTO THE LIVES OF THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH, STARTING WITH A COVER BY JOHN BUSCEMA & P. CRAIG RUSSELL

VISIONS

Welcome, fellow FOOMites, to another issue of the brand new look FOOM

Whasszt?

A new-look FOOM"? What was the matter with the old FOOM? Nothing, really, Kimo Sabes, but we figured that along with a new editor we should have a new look. If you want to know what that new look is like just flip through these petrifyin' pages and take a gander for yourselves . we think it speaks for itself! (Hmmm. This is the first time we ever heard of a *talking* magazine. Well, just strike it up as another first for the frolickin' folks at Magnificent Marvel!) So here it is, just for you from us

And speaking of the new editor (Who was speaking of a new editor? We were, just a few sentences back Pay attention, there'll be a test in the morning!) The new man at the helm is none other than Duffy Vohland, our Bombastic British editor. Duffy's got experience working on FOOM (he's been working on it longer than anyone but *Stan*!), so don't worry about anything changing too much. He was Associate Editor of the book with Scott Edelman, and he's gonna keep FOOM going in the manner to which you've become accustomed. Scott by the way, has left FOOM and you'll hear about that in upcoming months!

Now, since FOOM really belongs to you people out there in fan-land we think you ought to have a say in the what and wherefore of how things are done, so, before we *tell* you anything else (and believe us when we say there's a whole bunch to tell!) there's a few questions we desperately need to know the answers to. Such as What would you say to having FOOM come at you every *two* months instead of every three? We'd love to make FOOM bi-monthly but it can only happen if we know we've got the support of the troops (that's you guys!). Write us and let us know send anything; a letter, a postcard, a carrier pigeon, a camel with a note in it's mouth even an armadillo who knows morse code!! Just write! (And more subscriptions couldn't hurt!)

There's also a few other things. For instance, tell us what kind of things you'd like to see in the pages of FOOM. Howzabout regular columns (and if so, what kind?)? Interviews (and with whom?)? Photo features of the Fearless Bullpen? Articles on how to do things in comic book land? Howzabout your centerspreads? Do you like 'em and what kind of things would you like done in them? And how do you feel about our other regular thingamabobs like spoof pages, mini-items on what's happening at Marvel and the Fan Art Gallery? We gotta know, folks, so we can give you what *you* want! We ain't doing this for our health, y'know

Now that the questions are over, we can get on to answers and other nifty stuff. So, take it away

First of all we'd like you to join us in saying a big "Welcome back" to Dave Kraft. Dave's been away from the ranks of the Blushin' Bullpen for a while, just taking it easy in his old home state, North Dakota. But don't think that we're letting him take it easy while he readjusts himself to life at Marvel! Nope. We've got Dave working on a whole truck load of things . . like the article on the Scarlet Witch you'll find later on in this issue. Plus, he's hard at work on a piece for Jack Kirby's upcoming masterpiece, 2001: A Space Odyssey. And as if that wasn't enough, we've got Dave chained to his typewriter finishing up the fantastic adventures of Man-Wolf for an upcoming Marvel Spotlight! Who says this isn't the Marvel Age of back-breaking labor?

There're a few things that we think you people ought to keep an eye (or maybe even two of the little bloodshot devils!) out for. Like the Second Annual Mighty Marvel Convention. That's right, Red Ryder! Our first bash last March was such a smash hit that we just had to have an encore (and you can bet that this is the first of many encores that you're gonna see!) It's going to be at the wonderful Hotel Commodore once more and, like the last frantic free-for-all, the whole bloody (we told you Duffy edited the British books!) Bullpen'll be there to meet and greet you! Everyone from Stan the Man down to your own humble editor here will be there to talk to you and tell you everything about Marvel Comics that you've wanted to know but were afraid to ask! Don't miss this one or else you'll hate yourself in the morning!

And speaking of our friends (this magazine ain't called the *Friends* Of Ol' Marvel for nothing, y'know!) say a big howdy to Roger Klorese, the author of this issue's feature fiesta. Roger has been a comics fan (Marvels, natch!) for more years than he cares to remember, and we're proud to have him aboard the Good Ship FOOM for the first (but definitely not the last) time. You'll be seeing much more of Roger in these pages . even if we hafta go all the way up to Dartmouth College to make sure!

In case you haven't noticed yet, (How *could* you?) this issue of FOOM is dedicated to none other than the incredible Vision. Vizh (as we call him around the office) has been a proud member of the Marvel Universe for may moons now, and he is, without doubt, one of the most popular and well loved characters we've got. (He threatened to turn himself to the density of solid titanium steel and sit on our typewriter if we didn't say that.)

In order to kick off this issue, we've got a special cover featuring the Vision by none other than premiere Vision artist, John Buscema, and inked by the multi-talented Craig Russell. Plus, in addition to Roger's article about Vizh, we've also got interviews with the Vision's creator, (no, not Ultron-5!) Roy Thomas, and current Avengers scripter, Steve Englehart. They talk about their feelings and the ideas that inspire(d) them in their handling of the Vision.

So that, along with whole bushels of other neat things, is that. If we may repeat one last time, send us your thoughts on FOOM and tell us what you want to see here.

Remember . only you can prevent FOOMest fires!

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ARCHIE GOODWIN
ROY THOMAS
LEN WEIN
MARV WOLFMAN/Overseers
DUFFY VOHLAND/Editor
JAY MITCHELL/Contributing Editor
BARBARA ALTMAN/Darling of Design
LENNY GROW/Prince of Production
SOL BRODSKY/The Giver of All That's Good
JOHN BUSCEMA
SCOTT EDELMAN
STEVE ENGLEHART
ROGER KLORESE
DAVE KRAFT
PAUL KUPPERBERG
AL MILGROM
TOM PALMER
CHARLEY PARKER
PATY
DIANE RODRIGO
CRAIG RUSSELL
JIM SALICRUP
MARIE SEVERIN
Friends Of Ol' Marvel

(Editor's Note: A while ago, while burrowing through the FOOM top-secret files in search of a hiding-place for his avocado-and-liverwurst sandwich, one of our faithful office armadillos chanced upon a reel of video-tape. When we played it on our combination video-tape-player-laser-beam-electric-tooth-brush, we discovered that it was a television show about the life of the Vision. In typical fashion, we filed it away again. When the thought of this special Vision issue of FOOM Magazine was brought up, it was suggested to us by the same loyal armadillo (now corporate vice-president in charge of coffee breaks) that we transcribe this tape and honor our readers with the transcript. For conceiving such a wonderful idea, said armadillo was rewarded by (a) being given the privilege of copying the tape word-for-word himself, and (b) being given an extra can of flies each week. So he typed his little fingers to the bone. Now, as he munches away, we bring you, without further nonsense, the fruits of his labor.)

VISION, THIS IS YOUR LIFE!

FOOM. For your average, everyday, scarlet-faced android super-hero, the Vision still leads an exciting life. Or is that "lives"? I'm your FOOM reporter her at Avengers' Mansion in midtown Manhattan. In a few minutes, the Vision and his lovely wife Wanda, the Scarlet Witch, are expected to arrive. Jarvis, the Avengers' butler, has told Mr and Mrs. er, ah, the Vision and Wanda that there would be a charity function here this afternoon; but the Vision doesn't know we've brought our cameras here to bring America into the Avenger's living-room. Wait... they're at the door. Here they come!

VISION: What is happening here? Why are all these cameras here?

FOOM: Excuse me, Vision, but I'm from FOOM Magazine and

Yes, Vision, we've gathered here today to bring to our viewing audience the details of your life story. We should start at the beginning, but since there are so many different "beginnings" to your life, we'll begin by talking about your second "birth" your creation according to the version you knew until a few short months ago. Vision, do you recognize this voice?

VOICE. "I'm not only your partner, Vision in some strange way, I'm also . your grandfather"

FOOM: That, of course, Vision, is the voice of Henry Pym, your fellow Avenger, renowned biochemist and hero of a thousand costumes. Judging by the black-and-yellow costume he's wearing today, I'd say he's here as Yellowjacket. And with him is his lovely wife Janet, who is the Wasp.

Tell us, Yellowjacket, about that cryptic statement. How can you be the Vision's grandfather?

YJ: As you may know, the Vision's present existence is the indirect result of my robotics experiments. I built a robot who went out of control. It knocked me out, and proceeded to evolve itself into a more advanced state. That unfortunate creation of mine was to become one of our deadliest foes: Ultron! Ultron, though a machine, was quite like a human emotionally. He wanted a son. But he knew he couldn't trust any human, nor did he have any desire to, he had nothing but contempt for the human race. So he had the Vision made

FOOM: We'll be talking about that later in our program, Dr. Pym. But for now, I'd like to ask you, as the Vision's "sponsor" (so to speak) in the Avengers, if you recall your reaction to his bid for membership?

YJ: Not exactly, no. It was something about

WASP: Well, I remember exactly, High-Pockets. . word-for-word. You said, "Is a man any less human because he has an artificial leg or a transplanted heart? The five original Avengers included an Asgardian immortal and a green-skinned, tormented behemoth! We ask merely a man's worth . not the accident of his condition!"

FOOM: And that, I suppose, got the Vision's membership off on the right foot?

YJ: Yes. I'm sure that through the years he must have had a few doubts, we've all had doubts about our own performances. But he's proven himself time and again in battle; I trust and respect him as I do any Avenger as much as any other man at all.

VISION: Thank you, Hank.

FOOM: Yes, thank you, Yellowjacket. Vision, tell us what you yourself remember about that early period of your life.

VISION: Well, first I must say that all this is according to the facts as we knew them in those early days; as you said yourself, we shall deal with newer, more complete information at a later time.

I remember the moment I awoke, facing the metallic leer of the evil robot-man who created me, Ultron 5. He told me of my powers, as I stood there, bound: the ability to change my density, to make myself lead-heavy and diamond-hard, or lighter than the wind and able to walk through the thickest walls. But in spite of my questioning, he refused to give me a name. I was his "inhuman slave," he said; I was beneath his contempt. Then he sent me off on a mission: to kill the Avengers! And, much as I regret it, I tried. But a sudden blackout gave the Avengers a chance to subdue me, and to question me. I realized at that moment that my future, as well as my sentiments, were not with that evil machine-man, but with the Avengers, my former targets. We (the Avengers and I) set out to find Ultron. We found him at his old hideout but it was all a trap. He had caused my blackout, in order that I lure the Avengers back to his death-trap of a hideout. We had been tricked into a room whose walls were moving in on us, crushing us. But I lessened my density, and slipped through the walls of the murder-room, stalking him to his innermost lair. At first, Ultron thought I had returned to his service; but soon, he found that I had not, and tried to hurl me to my death. But I "turned the tables," as it is said, and led him full-speed into a bank of machinery which detonated, blowing him apart. We hoped he was gone forever; as we were to find out soon after, such was not the case.

FOOM: Yes, as we'll see later, Ultron, in several incarnations, was fated to reappear and plague the Avengers again (much as he'd already appeared, as "The Crimson Cowl"!). But we'll get back to that. For now, let's look at the next step along in your quest for self-knowlege. You asked the Avengers Assembled . . not just the active members at the time (the Wasp, Goliath, the Black Panther, and Hawkeye), but the rest of the group as well, including Captain America, Thor, and Iron Man . to consider you for membership in the Avengers. But first, before they would admit

you, the Avengers wanted to probe the mysteries of your past.

VOICE. " and mysteries there be a-plenty, tormented one."

VISION. That is Thor; the Thunder God said that at the time.

FOOM: That's right, Vision. Tell us, please, Thor, what happened next?

THOR: Aye, mortal. I did transport nine fellow Avengers and myself to the former dwelling-place of Henry Pym. We did find it deserted. But Henry Goliath, at the time remembered it as having been damaged; lo, though boarded up, it was restored. By the use of a memory-restoring device of his invention, friend Pym learned of his creation of the primitive robot which was to become Ultron, and of Ultron's use of his domicile as a workplace. And more: he found that the device which did contain the brain-patterns of Simon Williams, our late foe Wonder Man, was missing!

FOOM: Do you mean to say that the Vision has the mind of Simon Williams, a dead super-villain?

THOR: Nay, not the mind, but merely the "electrical thought-patterns." Williams' memory, as well as

his thoughts, are a thing of the past. The thoughts of the Vision are his own. And it is because of those thoughts—proud, noble, heroic—that the mighty Avengers didst make our offer of membership to the Vision.

FOOM: Thank you for those words, Thor.

This, then, is the story of the Vision's arrival at the gates of Avengerdom. But a few short months later, events were to transpire which would lead the Avengers to doubt the trust they placed in you. . .if only for a few short hours. Can you tell us about that?

VISION: Those were the darkest times of my life. Ultron had planted a command deep within the structure of my positronic brain, that, should he ever be destroyed, I would reconstruct him at the proper time. S.H.I.E.L.D. scientists had invented an alloy, adamantium, capable of withstanding the mightiest blows . .even the combined power of Thor and Iron Man. I sneaked into the S.H.I.E.L.D. Heli-Carrier, under this horrible compulsion, and. .oh, how it pains me to think about it . gave life to Ultron once more! But this time, just as before, I regained control of my faculties, and joined the Avengers to combat the newly-formed Ultron-6, as he rechristened himself. Unfortunately, I was injured, and forced to miss the battle in which the again-rebuilt (this time by himself) "Ultimate Ultron" was destroyed.

FOOM: The Avengers' confidence in you was restored then. The next few months were quiet ones. . that is, if you can call an intergalactic contest involving Kang and the Grandmaster, and a battle with one of the many incarnations of that band of hate-mongers, the Sons of the Serpent, quiet. But, in the time that followed, an event involving the membership of the Avengers was to take place which has profoundly affected the course of your life from that moment on.

VISION: Oh? What was that?

WANDA: What was that?!? If I didn't know better

VISION: A mere jest, my love. Of course, we are talking about your return to the Avengers. And it was an important event; somehow, I sensed even then that it would make a world of difference to me. Even then. .and that was before I knew the meaning of love, come to think of it.

WANDA: Come to think of it, you couldn't even "come to think of it" until a few months ago, during the Kang War.

VISION: Yes, I was just standing around, and all of a sudden, these funny things started cycling through my positronic memory! The message I found most often went something like this: "Englehart was here."

But I digress. Yes, I met Wanda then. It was, along with my creation-day and our wedding-day, one of the most important days of my life.

FOOM: But the road to your happiness, Vision and Wanda, was not smooth. First, there was an obstacle at home. a family obstacle, in fact. Do you know this voice?

VOICE: "Wanda, I'll never speak to you again not while you love that android! Not if your so-called love-life includes the Vision! You may think it civilized to consort with a machine—but I do not and no true sister of mine would feel differently!"

WANDA: My brother, Pietro Quicksilver! Those are the words he spoke to me when last we met. How did you get that statement of his? Did he come here to taunt us?

FOOM: No, Wanda; that was a tape from the Avengers Mansion video-monitor. But the protests of your brother were not the only stumbling-blocks in your paths: there was also the competition and flirtation of Mantis.

WANDA: Ah, the so-called "Celestial Madonna"! Fortunately, her marriage to one of the Cotati plant-people and her ascent to a higher state removed her as a problem. But she was quite annoying

FOOM: But you both survived it all and now you stand here before me, as perhaps the most unusual married couple in history

If the path to your emotional happiness was not at all clear, the physical side of your life was no picnic either. I remember a time, for example. Vision, when you were injured, and a most unusual form of surgery was performed.

VOICE: "Ant-Man entered the Vision and repaired him from the inside Recently, the Vision was able to return the favor. But the Vision almost entered my body once . for keeps!"

FOOM: Well put, Cap. I m sure you all recognize Captain America; what were you referring to, Cap, when you said that the Vision once almost occupied you?

C.A.: Another arch-foe of ours, the Grim Reaper, tried to convince the Vision that if he were to betray us, the Reaper would give him a new body. The Reaper offered the Vision a body which would, most likely, have some significance to him: that of Wonder Man. Wonder Man was the Reaper's brother, and he falsely held the Avengers responsible for his brother's death So he tried to entice the Vision, who was once more experiencing doubts about his humanity, with a flesh-and-blood body Wonder Man's body was long dead, though; the Reaper (and his silent partner, the Space Phantom) intended to trick the Vision into taking my body as a substitute. As a protective measure, they'd captured all the other Avengers as well. After long resistance, the Vision "agreed" to the arrangement;

he then waited, in his cool way, for the unholy duo to get careless. And, as always with their type, they slipped up.

FOOM: Thank you, Cap. Vision, I'd like to talk now about a particularly painful time of your life. It was shortly after your interest in Wanda became public knowledge. Do you know what I'm speaking of?

VISION: Yes, certainly — the "Living Bombs" business. It was unimportant in the largest sense: no large-scale movement, they were just a small group of ill, hateful people running around with bombs strapped to their bodies, endangering the public to feed their own sick, suicidal hatreds. It never ceases to amaze me, though, how helpful not only friends, but strangers can be in the face of horrors like the Bombs. Our mail was overwhelmingly favorable. The general public reaction was quite a help.

FOOM: We've already said that you've not told your complete origin. We're told by our reporters that the full secret of your "birth" was revealed to you just recently. To begin with, most of our viewers don't know that you were not just any android, but that

VOICE: "Before the Vision was the Vision — he was the original Human Torch!"

FOOM: That, as you know, is the voice of Reed Richards, Mr. Fantastic of the Fantastic Four, here today to share this day with you and the Avengers. Mr. Fantastic, how is it that the original Torch survived until today?

MR. F.: In the late 50's or so, the Vision and the original Torch told us, the Torch fell prey to radiation sickness and went nova, burning out his artificial life in a blaze of glory. In the mid-60's, his body was recovered by the F.F.'s old foe, the Mad Thinker, the master of androids. The Thinker brainwashed the Torch and used him as a weapon against us, but he broke his conditioning and sided with us, and burned out once more, this time in order to help defeat the Thinker. His body was commandeered from the Thinker's head-quarters by Ultron, who, as the Vision has told us, found Professor Horton, the original Torch's creator, working as a TV repairman. He forced him to rebuild the Torch into an android which would serve him. He colored his skin red so as to be a constant reminder to Ultron of this android's origins — to point out the irony of one of the greatest heroes of a bygone age aiding the greatest menace mankind has known!

But the Torch (who now looked like the Vision) rebelled. Ultron then decided that his memory-patterns were too strong for the Torch-Vision to be loyal to Ultron. So he erased his memory, giving him the mind-patterns of the late Wonder Man.

Is that correct, Vision?

VISION: Perfect, Richards.

MR. F.: That's all of it, then; the rest, you've already spoken about.

FOOM: Vision, did you have any indication ever that the truth about your origin was not unfolded completely to you? I mean, did you ever have any inkling of being from another age, or being another person?

VISION: I had experienced two attacks of fear of water and of closed-in spaces in recent months, both of which baffled me. I know now that the

reason for these is the fact that the Torch was imprisoned first in a swimming pool filled with concrete, then underwater, then under the desert.

Also, I recall the Sentinels saying something to the effect that I was an android of three decades' vintage. The Torch was built over three decades ago.

FOOM: Since your wedding, Vision and Wanda, have you noticed any differences in the way people react to you?

VISION. Not much, really. Those who hated us and feared us before the ceremony continue to, and our supporters still uphold us.

WANDA. If there's been any change in our lives recently, they've been the changes brought about by my studies of witchcraft.

FOOM: I always thought your "witchcraft" was the result of your mutation.

WANDA. No longer. I underwent training in the true Craft.

FOOM. Vision, what is it like living with a witch?

VISION. Actually, I have no basis of comparison. I don't know what it's like living with anyone else!

FOOM. Well, we're nearing the end of our program, Vision, and we'd like to thank you and tell you how pleased we are to bring your story to the folks out there, and we'd like to give you these few gifts as token of our esteem. We have put together an album, filled with details of the noteworthy events in your life which we've spoken about today. We'd also like to present you with this gift from our sponsors: a case of Impervious Margarine! Well, I'd like to thank you again, Vision! Where are you going? We're not quite finished yet!

(Editor's Note: Here, the taping degenerates into a free-for-all. The Vision leaves Avengers Mansion through the wall and Wanda is heard to say something about "fooling Mother Nature." It is obvious to this armadillo why this film has never been released, but, it must be studied for factual content. I submit this as my final report on the matter of the Vision.)

—RK

THE SCARLET WITCH

by Dave Kraft

Meditations on a Ms.

I am not Steve Englehart.

And I have never, in point of fact, had anything to do with writing the Scarlet Witch. That undoubtedly accounts in part for the reason why I was asked to do a couple hundred words on her as a character—to provide balance, since I am not subjectively involved with her or the Vision on a creative basis.

Yet I *am* subjectively involved, in another way.

My awareness of the Scarlet Witch dates back to her sporadic appearances as a villainess, generally in company with her brother, Pietro, and Magneto's band of evil mutants. I never paid much attention to her, though; there even remains a faint residue of the vague dislike which I felt toward the two costumed siblings 'til well after their eventual assimilation into the Avengers. Why I reacted negatively to them is no longer part of my memory, but it may have had something to do with their original status as evil mutants.

Anyway, I took my first real notice of the Scarlet Witch in AVENGERS #16, when the new roster containing her became an actuality. Gradually, my feelings toward her changed, and with time her presence in the Avengers—despite occasional short-lived absences—assumed a reassuring if often overlooked importance. From time to time she exercised her hex power as a diversion, usually when the other Avengers were at a temporary loss, but mostly she went unnoticed in the greater tapestry of the storyline.

She even endured a long-running though essentially unexplored romantic entanglement involving herself, Hawkeye, and Hercules—a relationship which revealed more about them than it did about her. It is only since her liason with the Vision, culminating in their recent marriage, and also since her exposure to and subsequent training in real witchcraft, that the Scarlet Witch has been much in the limelight. Thanks mostly to Stainless Steve, she's once again being impressed on my consciousness in a direct way, rather than merely being taken for granted.

Operating on the assumption that what's true for me must also be true for a sizeable number of other readers, these informal observations probably come as no great revelation.

However, it was as I sat in Schrafft's facing Jaunty Jim Salicrup over dessert, while simultaneously trying to get an angle on this article, that I came to a most abrupt realization. Namely, that despite my acquaintance with the Scarlet Witch over lo! these many years, I scarcely know her; she's still primarily an enigma to me.

After all, what do any of us really know about the Scarlet Witch?

Only the bare details of her character, if I may boldly answer my own rhetorical question. Perhaps that's what irritated me about the Scarlet Witch in the first place—her removed, seemingly aloof nature that reveals little of herself beyond the obvious motivation conveyed by her dialogue and actions. It was this absence of definitive "open" insight that, without ever really realizing it, I had unconsciously reacted against.

Truth to tell, I'd never gotten past the superficial to understand her character for what it is. The obvious can occasionally prove maddeningly elusive and, as they say in whodunit stories, I should have known.

The Scarlet Witch is an introvert.

My exercise in inference next lead me to the inevitable question—*why?* The answer to that is much easier. The mere possession of mutant abilities would affect a child in drastic fashion, and must certainly have served to turn young Wanda's thoughts inward, creating in her a contained intensity and a strong self-sufficiency, even as it brought those qualities and a frustrated bitterness to her brother.

As if that weren't enough, the mutant Ms. went on to the study of real witchcraft. *My* first exposure to real witchcraft came with my position as editor of a metaphysical journal which, at times, featured genuine articles on the occult. One of these detailed ritual proceedings and outlined requirements for the serious scholar of the art, and from it I know that the study and practice of witchcraft and magick requires severe discipline.

Wanda's mastery of it indicates an endurance and determination of character that runs deeper than is at once apparent, and her efforts to transcend her mutant power, rather than relying on it exclusively, prove that she is no weak-willed female stereotype.

Rather than being sharply characterized in a few brief issues, it is only if the total of her appearances in the X-MEN and the AVENGERS are taken as a tremendous and lengthy novel that her evolution and development can be appreciated and that all the complexities of her introverted nature emerge to the discerning eye.

Which is, I guess, in a roundabout way, intimating that I have a discerning eye. Forgive me such a pretense, however illusionary; these are merely myopic meditations intended to stir some thought and shed some insight on an oft-overlooked subject.

As I stated at the outset, while I have absolutely nothing to do with chronicling the ongoing exploits of the Scarlet Witch, I could not possibly affect an objective stance when it came to discussing her as a character. I have been reading the AVENGERS far too long for that. So I'm hoping these assorted personal observations have sufficed in lieu of a pedantic and boring monologue on the significance of any slight variations in the costume of the Scarlet Witch, or some similar treatise.

And, anyway, it's all over already. Quick, painless, and no more than the few hundred words I promised to provide for a balanced insight.

Take care, and stay aware!

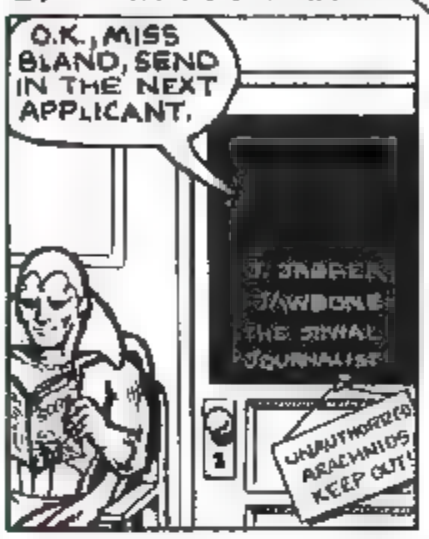
DAK

...WE ASK MERELY A MAN'S WORTH... NOT THE ACCIDENT OF HIS CONDITION!!

DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL, WE NOW PRESENT: THE

VISAGE

BY CHARLEY PARKER



Steve Englehart Speaks!

Part 1

"Journey to the Center of a Vision"

SE. Hello.
FOOM Steve? FOOM here.
SE· Hi.
FOOM· Have you been thinking about the Vision for this interview since I last spoke to you?
SE: To an extent. Scott talked to me about this last summer and I thought about it then. It hasn't been at the top of my mind but I have given it some thought.
FOOM. Right That's basically what I wanted Your thoughts on the Vision off the top of your head. What did you think when you first took over the book?
SE: Well, when I first took over the Avengers ...I've said this before and I'll say it again that Roy Thomas' AVENGERS were among *the* best comics that have ever been done I thought, as a reader, that Roy's AVENGERS were just incredibly top rate. Again, it wasn't just *Roy's* AVENGERS because there was Buscema and Adams and Buckler and people like that which have not graced THE AVENGERS pages in my day. I thought, just in general, it had really come together and I thought, Wow! When Roy asked me to take it over I was, at the same time, really happy about it because I really loved the strip and I was also new enough at comics not to really *know*...I had a lot of enthusiasm but I really didn't have the knowledge of how difficult it would be to follow in Roy's footsteps. I had a lot of confidence in myself and I figured I could do it What I tried to do then was like Roy's AVENGERS and I did that for about a year and a half. And it took me like that year and a half to discover that I wasn't Roy, that what I should be doing is Englehart's AVENGERS so I finally started pulling it in that direction about the middle of the Mantis story. It was started in a whole different way than it ended. By the middle of it I realized Gee, I'm trying to do Roy's strip here but I don't approach a book the way Roy does. I approach it from the basis of the characters and how they face the menace, whereas Roy approaches from the aspect of what's a good menace and once I got a story then I'll add characterization. So we're coming at it from a 180° apart and trying to do it on Roy's basis... there were ups and downs but I generally was not entirely satisfied with the way the Avengers were going. That's basically why I gave up THE DEFENDERS of the two because I thought, myself, that I had done a real good job on THE DEFENDERS. I'd liked what I had done with it and I thought okay, since I only want to do one group book I would rather stick with the one that I just don't feel that I've gotten up to my standards yet. So I dropped THE DEFENDERS and kept THE AVENGERS, and I know at the time lots of people said, why'd you do that? The point was that I wanted to concentrate on it and I feel real good about the Avengers now. I really feel like I found what I was trying to find with that, which was how to do an Englehart AVENGERS. As far as the Vision goes... the Vision was created, as far as I could determine from talking with Roy, to be Marvel's Mr. Spock. He was going to be the mysterious guy that everybody fell in love with... you can ask Paty, she'll testify to this... The sort of untouchable but super man. You know, the guy that everybody wants because he's so unapproachable. And he was an excellent character under that conception. It was Roy's character and Roy's handling at that time and then Roy started that trip of Wanda and the Vision together. He started it and then he got off the book and I was left with it and that was one of the things that really stymied me. I didn't know where to go with it. I was trying to go where he was going but there was really no place to go with it. Except .. well, I could have done Steve Rogers and Sharon Carter for the next twenty years where they sort of came and went, but I didn't want to do that because I had already gotten rid of the Steve Rogers Sharon Carter thing by the time I took over Captain America and I was well on the way to defining their relationships, with the one-armed vet (?) coming and going. He would have stayed if I had stayed but I wrote him out in

the last issue to give anybody who came after the chance to do whatever they wanted. But the point being that I've always thought the Clark Kent-Lois Lane type relationship might work for them, but Marvel comics are supposed to progress and things are supposed to happen. So, it finally occured to me, and I hate to say now how long it took me to really understand some of these characters I was working with, that if the Vision was in love with Wanda then he was not Mr. Spock, as Mr. Spock doesn't fall in love. What we had here was a Mr. Spock who wanted to be Captain Kirk, to follow that analogy. He wanted to be human and he wanted to be in love with her and he wanted to have feelings. That came as a great revelation to me and if it was going to progress, he had to get off the dime as far as his relationship with Wanda was concerned and the reason he wasn't going anywhere is because he was supposed to be Mr. Spock. When it finally occured to me that he wasn't, then I could do something with him. So I did. The way I look at him now is that he is, despite having human brain patterns, still a computer mind. He still has an ice cold voice, he still has a very logical approach to things from his Spock heritage. But at the same time he wants to be more human. It's not like the Tin Woodsman who goes around crying, "Oh gosh, if I could just have a heart everything would be fine." The Vision's more together than that but he wants to be more human without necessarily giving up anything he all ready is. He just wants to try to develop that side of his personality which the computer mind doesn't give him a whole lot of.

FOOM: On that wanting to be human aspect of the character, I would thing, and this is going back to some things you said in several letter columns, that he would want to have kids.

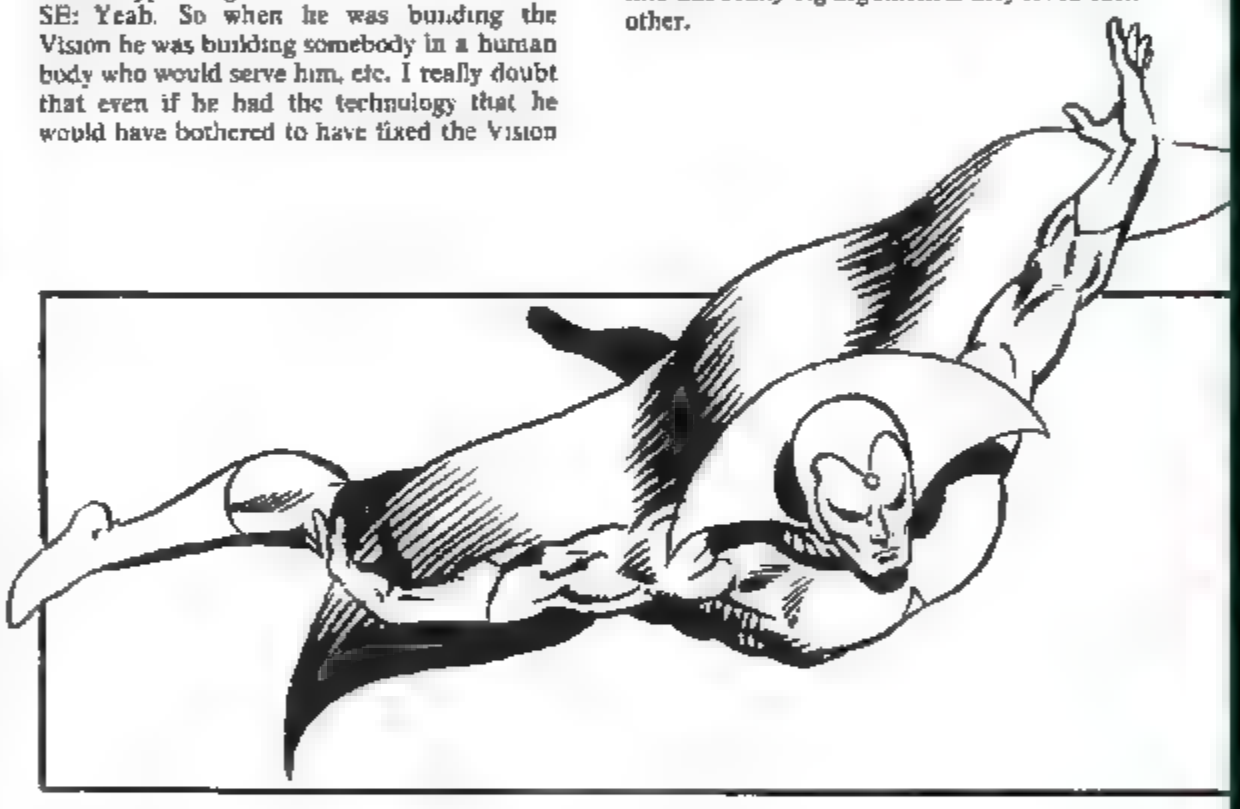
SE: That was exactly my idea, as a matter of fact. I kind of thought that he would and I didn't, being a male, necessarily think through Wanda's trip entirely. I'd have to say that I think I do a pretty good job on women generally but I didn't really . . . well, thinking through wanting to have a baby isn't something that's been part of my experience, but now that I'm married my wife and I have discussed it, etc., but the thing with Wanda and the Vision goes back to before I was married. But Paty made a good argument somewhere that Wanda was not at all interested in being a mother, which, once it was explained to me, I saw immediately and I said sure. My original idea was that they would adopt a kid. I thought that would be a nice, bizarre development in their relationship. But I think it is true that Wanda would not be so interested in it as, given that point . . . it's always been my opinion that the Vision could not be a natural father. I had played with the idea and rejected it as being impossible to explain in a code approved comic book . . . that the Vision could drop around to his local sperm bank and pick up a liter of stuff. But you could never explain that in comics and since that solution was therefore denied me entirely, the adoption thing seemed logical until I came to realize that Wanda wouldn't necessarily go for it.

FOOM: What I thought on the terms of the sperm bank thing was that when Ultron created him he created him fully operational in which case he would have had to get the sperm supply from either Hank Pym or Jarvis or . . . That could arise into some interesting things if it were Hank, but what could you get away with in terms of the Code.

SE: Yeah. So the sperm bank idea was just out from the start. The more I thought about a writer, as I've often said, particularly when I was working with Tuska, is supposed to make everything make sense. It's like you've got Point A and Point B and you've got to figure out a way to get from one to the other that will make sense. You've got to be able to read it and think that it's progression and nobody thinks well, you think of the beginning and then the end and then a way to get there. Always a challenge. But, given any two points you can find some way to get between them and thus, given the idea that they were not going to have kids it became very logical to me that Ultron-5 would not have endowed the Vision, as I said in the letters page. There are reasons. I could give reasons why. Given the fact that he was trying to build a sort of "son" . . . you never think of your son as being a sexually together individual. A son is not thought of in terms of his sexual prowess.

FOOM: The same with your father and mother type thing.

SE: Yeah. So when he was building the Vision he was building somebody in a human body who would serve him, etc. I really doubt that even if he had the technology that he would have bothered to have fixed the Vision up. It wouldn't have been of any use to him. He had no inkling that anything else was going to happen. So, as far as I'm concerned, the Vision is non-functional in that area. We will say for the sake of Wanda that he is physically functional. Anyway, you may have a point. The Vision may care but, I think that it's part of the trip about wanting to become human but at the same time, I've considered, and this is just another idea . . . I always have a bunch of ideas floating around to choose from . . . that I'd use in the Wonder Man story. Quite probably in this story, with the possibility of his regaining his full humanity, there could be a very oblique discussion about is Wanda satisfied with the way things are and this and that. But I think that the reason I got them married in the first place is because they're real good for each other, just the characters as established. She's very understanding with a guy like him. She's levelheaded, very warm, so on and so forth. She understands where he's at (A singles Bar in the Bronx. . .) and can not only live with it, but love it. And he digs her and I think they make a good couple and that's sort of where the whole overall thrust of the thing is now. There's no longer that will he or won't he? kind of trip because it became obvious after a while that he would. Now that they're married just the adjustments and there's still the big story that deals with what happens when they face the world for real. But basically, he's sort of like at Stage Two, having totally abandoned the pure concept of Mr. Spock. We're into the stage now where we see what happens when Mr. Spock gets married. He will be trying to adjust to it and the thing that I've already started to play with, and will be bringing to fruition here, is he brought her back from their honeymoon after a day and a half and said . . . well, okay. . . they were having fun and all, that we assume, but it's not such a big deal to him as it is to say, us. It's very logical to him that, okay, we've gone away and now let's get back and see what happens. And Wanda doesn't look at it like that and, being newlyweds, I didn't want to get them into a big argument, because newlyweds wouldn't get into this really big argument if they loved each other.



FOOM: But later on she'll think about it.

SE: Well, he's all ready thinking about it. Again, it's only been touched on since there's so much going on, but I have set it up where he's thinking, "Gee, everybody thinks it's strange that I came back after a day and a half. Maybe I'm not as human as I thought I was. . . there's a lot I still have to learn." He wants to be cool, and at the same time he doesn't have any experience at it so he's having to learn where it's at as he goes along.

FOOM: Are you going to open up their marriage in terms of Quicksilver and possibly even the Whizzer?

SE: Well, I understand Quicksilver is going into the Inhumans but I don't think it would be a big deal to get him back for a guest-star. I had been wanting to do it for a long time, and probably still will, something with Quicksilver. I want to have him come back and explain why he's a bigot. Present a sort of sympathetic . . . explaining his viewpoint because everybody's viewpoint makes sense to them. I don't

like to do the same situation over and over again so I think I would have Quicksilver coming back and have him come to at least grudging terms with the situation as it exists. But of course he wouldn't come back and consent to be an Avenger or something like that. He'll still go over and be an Inhuman, or whatever he is, but something with Quicksilver eventually. Again, since I am going to be concentrating on the Vision and Wanda and Yellowjacket and the Wasp as a sort of nucleus for the sequence beginning with Avengers 150, I would expect that there would be something there. What I also want to get into is Wanda and Jan becoming good friends as the wives of the group. Instead of the quadrangle thing with Mantis and the Swordsman breaking in and out between Wanda and the Vision, just two couples who like each other. Like Hank and Vision could hang out together and watch the football game and drink beer and whatever's happening. As far as the whole team, that's why I decided on the team as it is because I've got that nucleus of four and then the two old guard guys, Captain America and Iron Man, and then the Beast, who's sort of the perennial outsider.

FOOM: I wish the Beast would get some of his old dialogue back

SE: Well, that was shot to hell by Roy and Gerry when they started the Beast strip. When I took it over he was all ready supposed to not talk like that. It was the first strip I ever wrote and they said, 'Here, don't write him like he used to be.' Okay, so what I came up with was that real crazy sort of continuous comedy monologue that he's into. And I liked it. So did everybody else, except maybe you

FOOM: No, no, I like it. It's just that I think he should still have some of that left.

SE: Well he's smart. There's no question of that. He's not stupid at all which is what made him win out over Hawkeye because he could see the weirdness in it a lot more clearly. He's smart but he's just more laid back. He grew up and he went through the whole X-Men trip... I think there are people who, while in high school, are all intellectual or heavy in to something and as they grow up they start to say, 'Yeah, well, I can roll with the punches a little bit more, too.' I just don't think you're going to see much change in the Beast in that direction. I'm not going to make him stupid, but I like writing him as this crazy guy

FOOM: Right. I was also going to mention where, in the last issue or so, he turned blue and you said he was mutating further. Is that just in terms of changing his color or did you have something else planned?

SE: No, that was an editorial decision. The book was not selling and everybody sat around wondering why it wasn't selling. They figured it was because the Beast didn't look impressive enough as this sort of motley gray. The gray, you know, comes out this sort of light purple anyway. That was just an art decision, basically... "We're making him blue... explain it, Steve!"

FOOM: But back to the Vision... Have you done any ideas or plotting for the Vision story in SPOTLIGHT?

SE: No, not really

FOOM: So you haven't had any real thoughts on how the return of Wonder Man is going to affect the Vision?

SE: No. All I know is that Marv said he wanted him back and it sounded like a good thing to get into for the 150th anniversary issue. As to what's going to happen with him I don't really know. That's still two issues away as far as plotting goes. I do the stuff pretty much in sequence. I have ideas floating around as to what I'll do when I get there but basically I take it one book at a time. But the Vision, who's so secretive, is pretty unknown as a character so there's not that much known about him

FOOM: I really wish you hadn't had him think.

SE: Oh yeah. That was an idea to try and open him up some and I agree with you and I don't plan to do that again. I did it for a reason, but upon further consideration I, as I said, agree with you.

FOOM: I think that pretty much anything you want to do with the Vision can be done without having him think.

SE: There is a problem with that, in that because he never thinks you never really know what he's doing inside which is okay with a Mr. Spock concept, but with a more developed person, after a time, you don't know where he's at. Which is why, in fact, in that Hellcat issue on the second page, we have him thinking, but not in terms of thought baloons just blurbs.

FOOM: That's the way it should be done

SE: Right. I agree with you. So, we live and learn. It's really an organic think. Stan said that Spider-Man used to write itself and Len says that too. In some ways the books do and in others they don't. It's organic in that each issue is a step along the road. I'm sure not trying to tell you I've written THE AVENGERS perfectly

FOOM: Like you said before concerning the writing on THE AVENGERS when you first started, it's difficult to write somebody else, it hampers you... but it must be much easier to say 'Well, now I've got the strip and I'm going to write me.

SE: Well, I learned that. But I didn't know it from the start for sure and once I started approaching the Avengers as a sort of... well as an analogy, Roy was writing the book as the television Avengers where I should have approached it as kind of the Waltons just because I started taking it from the characters point of view and that lead to the whole Mantis and quadrangle thing. That's when I started liking it as far as really being satisfied with what was happening. Trying to do it from somebody else's point of view... from Roy's point of view... that's just not where I'm at.

FOOM: When you were doing the Mantis-Swordsman thing, were you planning on doing anything with Mantis and the Vision?

SE: That started before while was finding my own style on the book. Mantis was originally supposed to be a femme fatale who was going to come in and sort of dump the Swordsman originally and start putting the moves on everybody. If you remember, when she first met the Avengers she kissed everybody. In fact, the Vision was going to be the object of her affections. My original idea was to have the Vision swayed by her and would, in his interest of becoming human, find a second sexy woman who was definitely on his trail and he would be enough of a little boy in that sense to be flattered and even interested. But as I wrote the strip month to month I could never get it to the point where he could do that to Wanda. I tried making Wanda bitchy for a while but I could never convince myself that he would do it. It seemed logical as a concept to work towards but I could never get there because I could never make myself believe it. So it became more in everybody else's mind than a physical act.

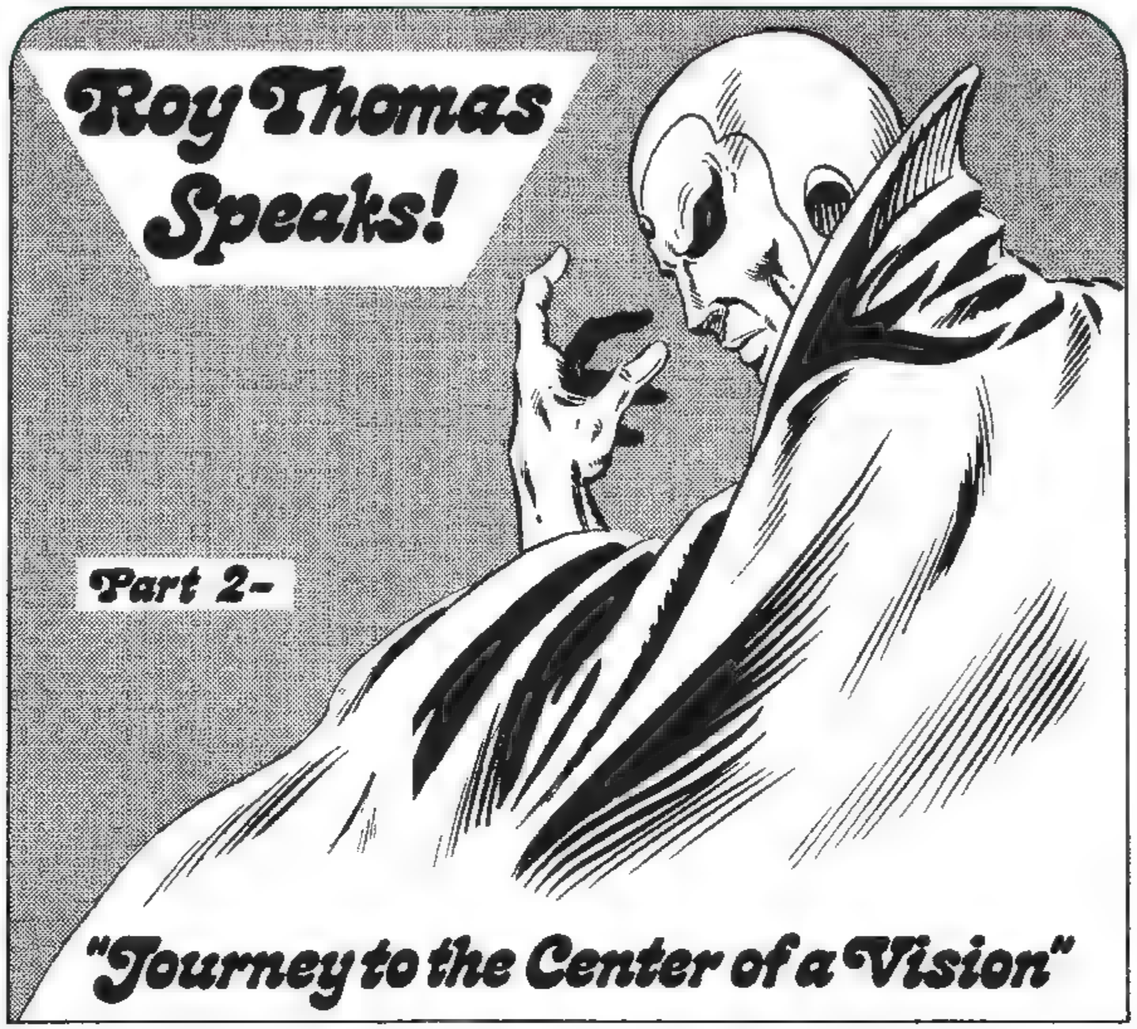
FOOM: It seems to me that even though he is logical in as much a sense of the word as possible in his quest to become human he would at times go a bit overboard and mess up in some way or another

SE: Yeah. That's what I'm getting into now. The trials and tribulations of an android who wants to be human. I want to keep him basically happy. I don't want to change it. Right now, I've got it so this'll be a happy marriage. He'll mess up but everything'll be all right. They're too much in love. He doesn't really know how to do what he wants to do, which is to become human, so he will make mistakes. I don't foresee any real heavy traumas where Wanda'll leave him or anything.

FOOM: There's a problem there with The Avengers being so much a part of their lives and separately they'd have to leave their whole lives in order to leave each other

SE: Yeah. I couldn't see it in Reed Richards and Sue and I don't see it in Vision and Wanda either. They seem to be happy together. Perhaps Hank and Jan Pym, since he's so studious and she's so flighty, but not Wanda and Vision. They're very happy together. I really like to do characters and play them against each other

FOOM: Okay, Steve, I guess that's about it for now. Thanx a bunch.



FOOM What were the circumstances behind the creation of the Vision and why was he created?

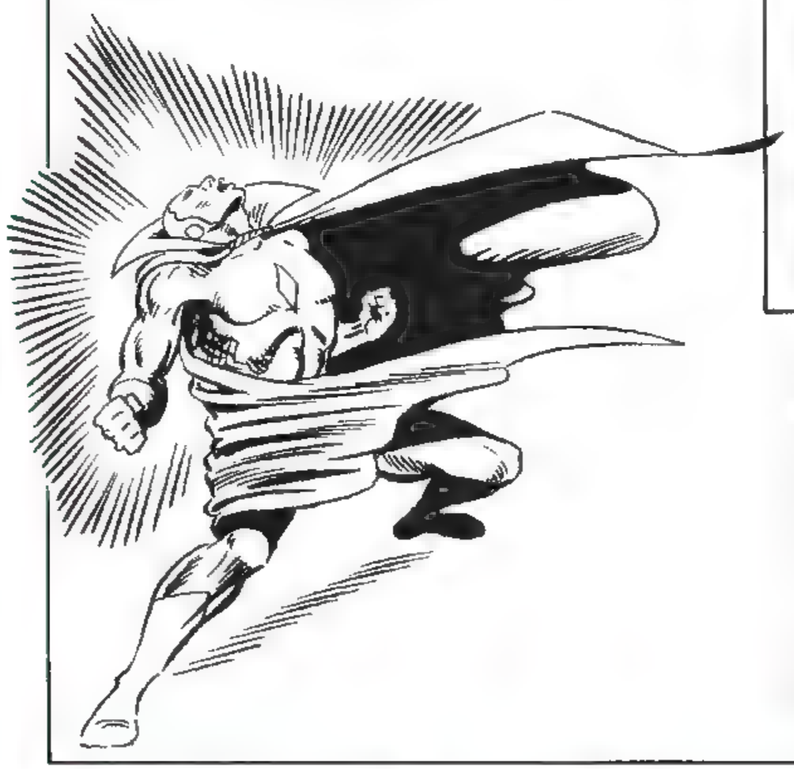
RT. The Vision was created because, at certain periods, I was not allowed, because of editorial policy, to use Captain America, Thor and Iron Man as much as I wanted to. I had to, in fact, at various times, take them out of the Avengers against my will. Later I sneaked them back in. But at this particular time I wanted to create an Avenger that I could play around with . one that I had more or less invented and I wanted to bring back a new version of Jack Kirby's Vision character. I don't know if he wrote it or not in those days .. he probably did I wanted to use that character, or something like it, a guy from another dimension, only trapped in our dimension. Sort of an earth-bound Silver Surfer And Stan, at the same time that I went over it with him, wanted an android character He wanted the name Android Man or something like that. I could call him anything I wanted to... I would have called him Mandroid or whatever, Andro, or something like that. I didn't like the idea as such, but finally, since I really wanted to get the Vision I talked Stan into having the Vision but as an android instead of being a guy from another dimension. And everything went pretty well. The only thing I had done was to have his face made red because we didn t want to have any more blue or green people... we had a lot of those, so I made the face red. Stan always thought it looked too humorous, but to date nobody's ever said it looked humorous. Another thing I did... most central characters always have a chest symbol so I put the diamond on

FOOM: Actually, the chest symbol is so insignificant that he could have almost gone without it.

RT Yeah. But I didn't want him to because I think it focuses attention on him. I think it makes a better character, visually, then he would have been without it. Otherwise you've just got a green chest. You're right. It wasn't terribly important. I just liked it so I put it on there. And the jewel on the head. Of course the character's quite different from what I had originally planned, but that was the main inspiration... getting a new Avenger that I could play with. He was very popular from the beginning and I had a lot of fun with him. I remember that the second issue he appeared in, which told his origin backwards .. you know, each flashback taking place before the one earlier in the book, was one of the best selling AVENGERS ever...It was called "Even an Android Can Cry"...(probably because it had all these characters charging at the reader on the cover.) I know that was during a period when the AVENGERS were doing very, very well and it created a lot of enthusiasm at the time and the Vision became a popular character immediately. Especially with his on-again off-again romance with the Scarlet Witch and so forth

FOOM: When you first came up with the Vision did you plan the whole thing with the original Human Torch?

RT: No, actually that was Neal Adams' idea. Neal, when we did that one giant-size book together, stuck this one panel in there of the



Ant-Man seeing something in the Vision's chest that somehow gave him the idea that he was the Human Torch. It's kind of ridiculous in a way. I just left it in as a kind of subtle bit because I felt one panel in the middle... and it could have been interpreted in 3000 ways

It was unfortunately leaked to the fan press and even a letter in a letters page after I had stopped doing the book was printed that mentioned the fact.

FOOM: It was my letter. (Laughter.)

RT: Was it? It shouldn't have been printed ...it's not your fault, tho. That gave it away to a few people. It was even mentioned in an article in Gallery or something. It was an idea of Neal's and I've never been terribly wild about the idea but I had decided to use it simply because it gave him a little bit of pedigree. It wasn't a terribly important idea ..

FOOM Steve certainly used it to the hilt.

RT Yeah. He did

FOOM: I think I once heard you say that Kirby designed the character

RT: No. But he was based partially on the early Kirby character. But no, Kirby had nothing to do with it.

FOOM: John Buscema came up with the design?

RT: Well, basically, I explained to John what I wanted and sent him a picture of Kirby's Vision...one of the early issues where he looked very grim . and I said I wanted that but I wanted kind of a helmet feeling. And I think I probably drew a picture of the head and mentioned the jewel and mentioned the diamond on the chest and so forth. John came up with it and we changed it between the first and second book only in how the cape fastened in the front. But it was basically a combination of sort of Kirby's and mine and Buscema s

FOOM When you were doing the Vision the book was selling so well. Did you ever think of spinning him off and trying him elsewhere?

RT: Yeah. I deliberately wanted not to suggest that... I think one time I might have in a moment of weakness, but basically I never really wanted to because I liked him Y'know, he became an android adrift in a world where all the characters are misfits. It seemed to me the idea of android running around that people might distrust would be not too different from all the other misfit heroes. I thought that in the context of a group he works better. It was a combination of the fact that I don't think Stan ever really realized how popular the character was and, since the name the Vision is not a strong name in and of itself, was not that strong because it doesn't suggest strength I never really wanted to spin him off and we may have discussed it once and Stan didn't want to and I, if I ever brought it up and all, let it drop immediately because I really didn t care too much for the idea. I didn't mind an occasional guest shot somewhere else or a team-up but if it were left to me I'd just as soon not do a Vision book

FOOM. Well, we're doing one now in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT

RT. Well, that kind of thing makes sense to me and I don't begrudge anyone for it. It's now quite a different character For example, I don't know if I would ever have had the Vision and Scarlet Witch get married. There are other things, like showing the Vision without part of his costume on... I just would never have done it. He just doesn't look that good and it takes away from the grim dramatic quality of it to make him look like that. It's a nice realistic touch but I don't think that realism in and of itself is always a good idea. I respect the fact that Steve has made the book sell quite well since he's taken it over but I don't always agree with what he does in it

FOOM: When you created him did you think he could conceive?

RT: Oh yeah. I always had in mind that, not long after he was created, the Vision was like the red androids in Robert Silverberg s TOWER OF GLASS. They too had a kind of sex life But as far as conception I'm not quite sure what I had in mind when he was first created. I always assumed that he was complete but as far as having a child, I don't know. Can he now?

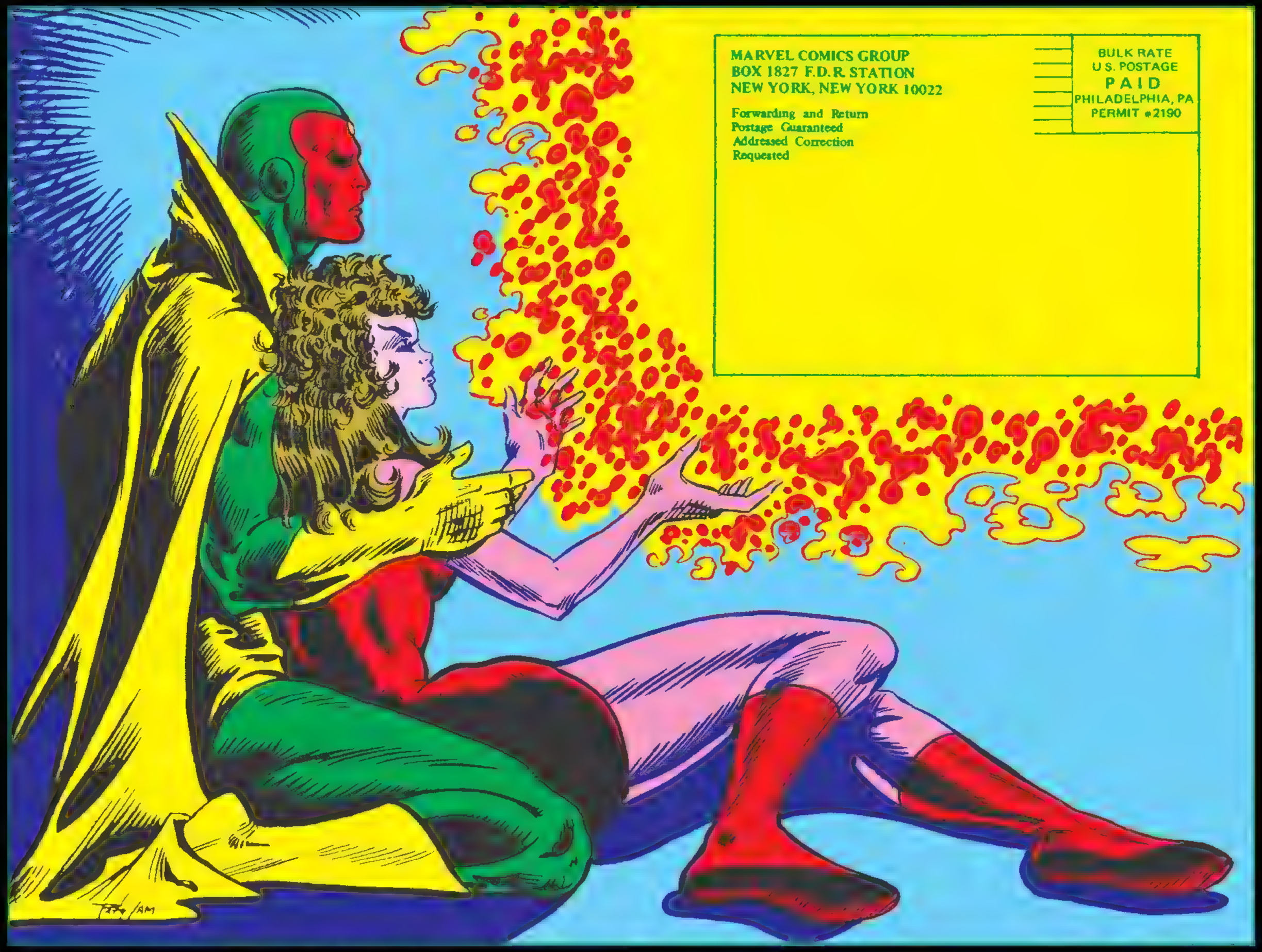
FOOM. No. Steve said no.

RT: I think I probably would have assumed no.

FOOM I was thinking along the lines of Ultron-5's having used Hank Pym or Jarvis as a donor

RT: Jarvis, I think, would have been kind of ridiculous because, though I think there is nothing repulsive about old age, I think it's an inherent turn-off to kids.

FOOM: Hokay, Roy, I guess that's it.



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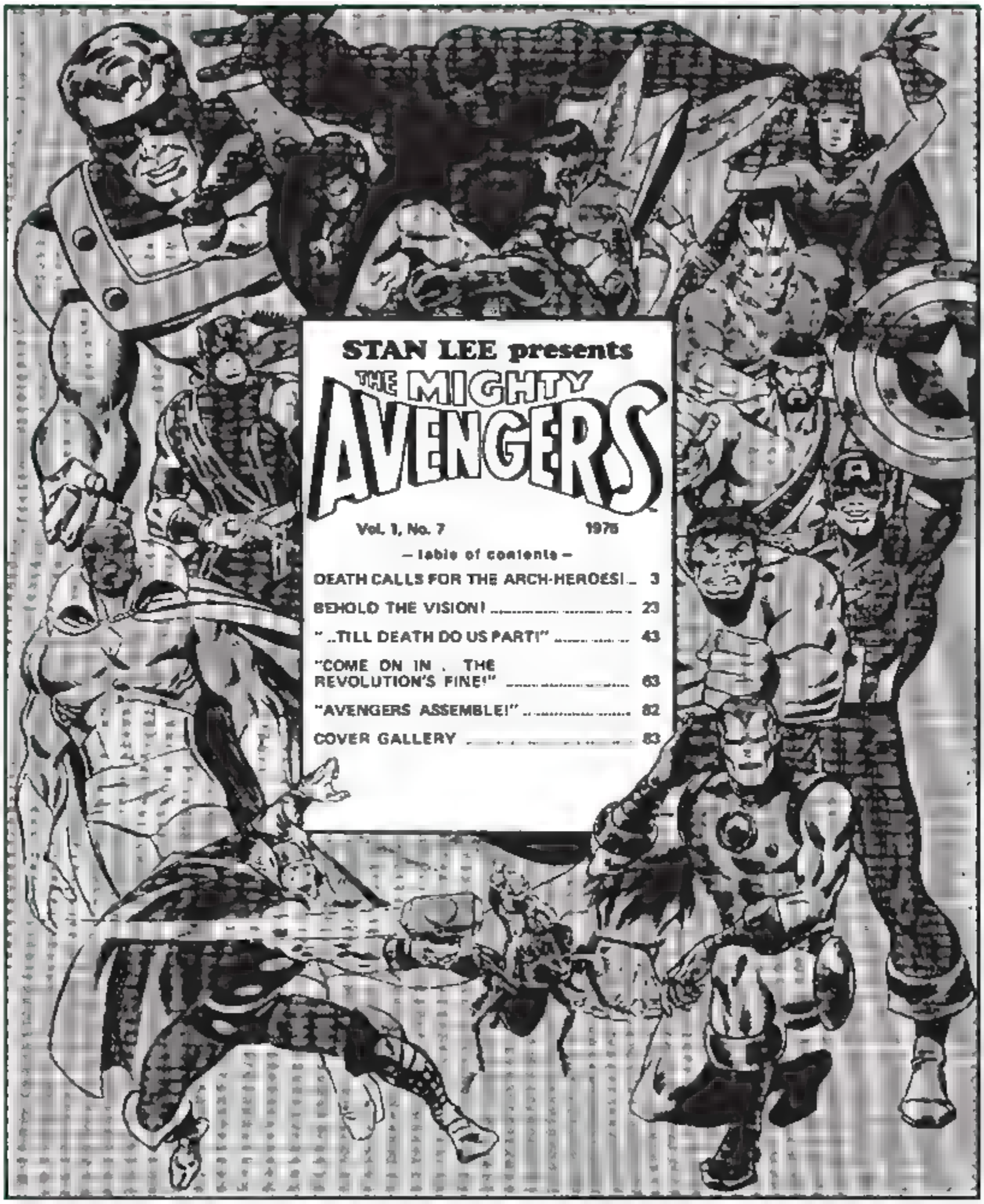

MARVEL TREASURY EDITION #7 FRONTISPIECE

MARVEL TREASURY EDITION #7 (1975) COVER, BY JACK KIRBY & FRANK GIACOIA
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GIANT-SIZE AVENGERS #2'S COVER ORIGINALLY FEATURED DOCTOR DOOM ALONGSIDE KANG THE CONQUEROR AND RAMA-TUT. THE NOT-SO-GOOD DOCTOR HAD BEEN IMPLIED TO BE RELATED TO, OR EVEN THE SAME PERSON AS, KANG/RAMA-TUT BY STAN LEE AND JACK KIRBY IN *FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL* #2 (1964). THE FINAL COVER REMOVED DOOM'S FIGURE AND COVER CAPTION, LEAVING THE MYSTERY ALIVE.

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